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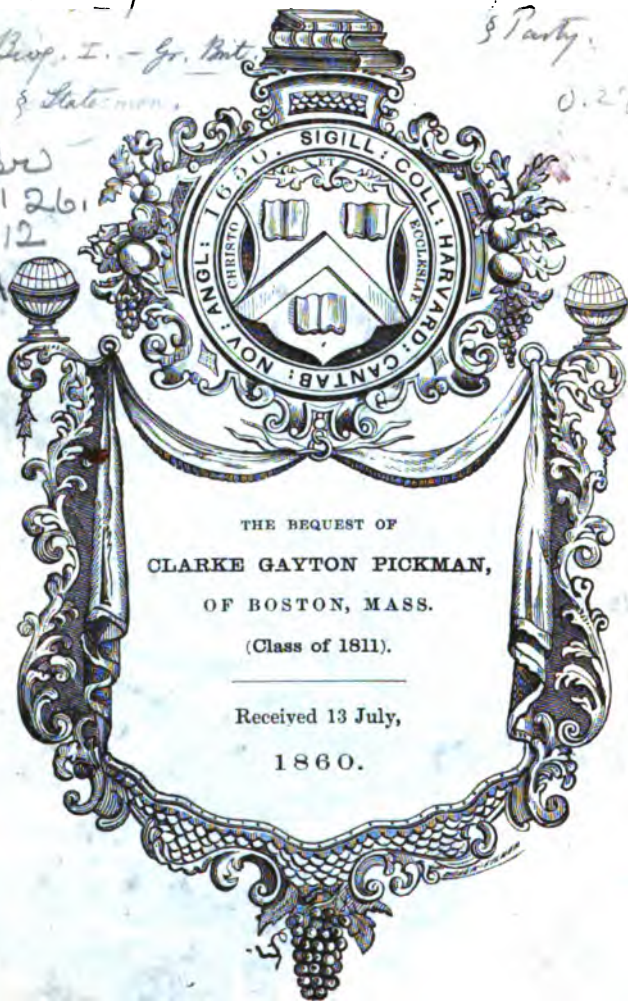
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HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
STATESMEN
WHO FLOURISHED IN
THE TIME OF GEORGE III.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
REMARKS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

NEW SERIES, FOLLOWED BY
PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC AND MIXED GOVERNMENT,

BY
HENRY LORD BROUGHAM, F.R.S.,
MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE, AND OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF NAPLES,
PRESIDENT OF THE USEFUL KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY
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TO

M. GUIZOT,

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE, AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

THIS VOLUME, describing the most important period of French History, is inscribed in token of the Author's great respect for a Statesman whose efforts have constantly been directed towards the Improvement of the People at Home, and the Preservation of Peace Abroad.

INTRODUCTION.

The new and concluding series of this work is delivered to the public under a grateful sense of the favour with which the former were received. It has been my desire to make some small return for such kindness, by redoubling my care to prevent any bias of a party or a personal kind from influencing the opinions pronounced, whether upon men or upon measures. Conscious as every one must feel how naturally our affections are engaged in behalf of those whose opinions agree with our own, and how apt the adversaries of those opinions are to be hardly dealt with in the judgments we form of them, I have most scrupulously made it my endeavour to treat all with whose history I have dealt as if I was ignorant of the principles which professedly guided their conduct, until I came to describe how far it was governed by them.

It has further been the constant object of these pages to record whatever tended to promote the great and united causes of public virtue, free institutions, and universal peace; holding up their friends to the veneration of mankind, their enemies to scorn and aversion; while the glare that success gives to bad actions, and the shade into which good ones are thrown by failure, have, as far as possible, been shown to be temporary only; and mankind have been constantly warned to struggle

against the prepossession thus raised by the event, and to mete out their praise or blame by the just measure of desert.

The first part of the volume now published relates to the French Revolution, and to the men who bore the foremost part in its most trying and interesting crisis. In giving this account I have enjoyed particular advantages, having the pleasure of knowing several worthy and intelligent men who bore a part in the transactions of those times. To one of these, my learned colleague in the National Institute, M. Lakanal, I was introduced by the kindness of my distinguished friend M. Mignet; and I have received from him many important communications. He was not a member of the Committee of Public Safety; but he belonged to the high popular party in the Convention, and he was at the head of the Committee of Public Instruction. He retains, at the advanced age of above fourscore, all the ardent zeal for human improvement and steady devotion to the cause of freedom which so eminently marked his early years.

The reader of these pages is further under obligations to my friend Earl Stanhope for a valuable note respecting Fouché.

BROUGHAM, 1st October, 1843.

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STATESMEN
OF THE
TIME OF GEORGE III.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

It is impossible to understand the reign of terror which in France succeeded the overthrow of the monarchy, or to form a just idea of the too-celebrated individuals whose names are inseparably attached to the history of that dismal period, without examining the origin of the Revolution, marking the position in which it both found and placed the country, and tracing the steps of its progress from the first commotions that shook the ancient establishments, to the shock that consummated the destruction of the political system, and for a season appeared to threaten the ruin of society itself.

A controversy at one time prevailed upon the share which philosophers and literary men generally had in bringing about the great changes now under our consideration. They who raised this question really meant to discuss the influence which had been exerted by the general diffusion of knowledge and improvement of the people, in creating a desire for more ample privileges and a better system of government. For, although some few reasoners had contended that there was a sect of free-thinking men both disbelieving the religion and disapproving the political institutions of the State, leagued together in a kind of conspiracy to overthrow both, for the purpose of emancipating their species from all the ancient control under which they had so long been living, yet no one, who seriously reflected upon the disparity between the means and the end in the structure of this supposed scheme, could believe that any such plot had a chance of success, unless in so far as its authors might aid the general progress of mental improvement, which no one could deny was everywhere to be traced. Thus the Abbé Barruel and Professor Robison, who were the principal advocates of the doctrine, had not many followers; while a much more considerable body of reasoners maintained, not merely that the revolutionary spirit which had broken out in France, and was with difficulty repressed in other countries, had no connexion with any plot or the machinations of any sect, but that the whole convulsion which shook all Europe to its centre was the result of comparatively trivial and accidental circumstances.

This opinion was maintained with greater force of argument, and with more weight of authority, by M. Mounier, formerly president of the National Assembly, and distinguished by his talents, his virtues, and his patriotism, than by the bulk of ordinary writers and speakers. He had distinguished himself by the moderation of his liberal opinions when a member of the States General; he had filled the chair of the Assembly with great credit; and he had quitted France when the profligate and cruel councils of the violent party began to prevail. No man was better entitled to be heard upon the causes of a revolution, in which he had borne so honourable a part; and as he alike rejected the extremes of either side, dissenting as much from those who resisted all change as from those whom no change would satisfy, he seemed as safe a guide to the truth of the case as could well be selected from the host of reasoners whom the controversy called forth.

M. Mounier denied altogether the share ascribed to lodges of freemasons and chapters of *Illuminati* in producing the revolutionary movement; he rejected entirely the notions of those who traced to such actual conspiracies any portion of that great event; and had he stopped here no one could have questioned the soundness of his views. Indeed he was enabled, from his personal knowledge of the actors in the French States General and National Assembly, to refute the specific statements of fact upon which the speculations of the Abbé Barruel and his followers reposed. Thus, to take a single example, the machinations which were asserted to have been practised upon M. Camille Jourdan (a worthy person of extremely insignificant talents and no influence), and to have gained him over to the revolutionary party, could not by possibility have been so used, inasmuch as that gentleman assured M. Mounier that he had never in his life seen or communicated with a single individual of those confidently named by the Abbé as his seducers, or with any other persons of the same class.

But M. Mounier did not content himself with excluding the lodges and the chapters of secret associations; he was equally confident in his exclusion of the philosophers and their writings. Not only, according to him, had the direct attempts by plot and conspiracy no hand in undermining the old French Government, but the indirect and gradual influence of infidel opinions, and revolutionary doctrines propagated through the press, the encyclopædias, the dissertations, the romances, the correspondence, the poems, the epigrams—all the heavy and all the light artillery of the band so formidable by its numbers, its learning, its genius, and its wit, so indefatigable in its exertions against the established order of things, so incessant in its efforts to undermine all prejudices, to strip all established institutions of the respect with which time and feeling and associations had clothed them, so zealous in converting mankind from settled faith in holy things, in rousing them against abuses as well in the State

as the Church, in declaring the natural rights of men, in painting their wrongs, in displaying the merits of the people, and denouncing the crimes of priests and princes—all the teaching of the D'Alemberts, the Condorcets, the sneerings of the Voltaires, the eloquence of the Rousseaus, the fancy of the Diderots, the social powers of the Holbachs and the Grimms—all were without influence in preparing the great change; and the press which over Paris and over France had for a century been working with the corruptions of the Court and the Church and the sufferings of the people, and taken its whole tone from the writings of those great men, and the circles of fashion which everywhere concentrated and reflected the lights thus shed abroad—were all, according to M. Mounier, wholly foreign to the purpose, wholly unconcerned in bringing about a change that took precisely the direction to which all those efforts pointed; in overthrowing a system of ecclesiastical and political government, against which all those blows had been aimed, in producing a general movement of that people to excite whom in this very manner and to this very movement all those various exertions had so evidently been made. It should seem that those who held such opinions as these were prepared to believe, on seeing a battery erected against a town, and bearing its fire upon the walls for weeks, that the breach which was made had not been caused by bullets, but by an accidental earthquake. According to M. Mounier and his followers, the whole mystery of the Revolution was contained in the accidental derangement of the Finances, the convocation of the States General, and the vacillating conduct of the Court and the Ministers in first suffering the Commons—the *tiers état*—to have a double number of representatives, and afterwards allowing the three orders to join in their deliberations, sitting in the same hall. Had it not been, they contended, for the recent addition of nearly fifty millions to the debt, while the revenue was insufficient to defray the public expenditure and pay the interest owing to the public creditor; had not the King agreed to call the States when no means of obtaining the needful supplies could be devised; nay, after they were called, had not an undue proportion of deputies been granted to the Commons, and the majority thus created been permitted to act on the whole body by joint voting—the whole storm would have passed away, and the ancient establishments have continued to guide the religion and rule the fortunes of the country.

On the opposite side of the question there appeared one of the most remarkable pieces that ever adorned the periodical literature of any country. Mr. Jeffrey began his labours in the 'Edinburgh Review,' and laid the foundation of that celebrated journal's fame by a paper, in which he examined and refuted M. Mounier's doctrine—a paper of which it would be hard to determine whether the inexhaustible imagery of its illustrations, the profound wisdom of its opinions, or the felicitous diction of its style, most deserves our ad-

miration. This eminent person and those who agree with him are far from denying that the deranged finances of the country, and the imbecility of the Government, had a share in accelerating the Revolution and in directing its course. A yearly expenditure of sixteen millions, with a revenue of less than nineteen, leaving not three to pay the interest and charges on the debt of between ten and eleven millions annually, formed such dreadful embarrassment as might well shake any established system, how wisely and how vigorously soever it might be administered. But it is certain that greater disorder has prevailed in the revenue of other States, and has been got over by the rough, though vigorous, expedients which arbitrary power has at command, without even shaking the stability of the national institutions. Nor could all the errors of the Neckers, the Briennes, the Maurepas, the Calottes, have dislocated any portion of a system which had not been prepared to crumble in pieces by the ravages of time, or the undermining of the public opinion, or the ferment of popular discontent, and the universal love of change.

M. Mounier was correctly and beautifully described, in the paper referred to, as having given for the causes of the Revolution circumstances which really proved it to be already begun; as having gone no further back than to the earliest of its apparent effects, instead of tracing its hidden sources; as having mistaken the cataracts that broke the stream for the fountains from which it rose; and contented himself with referring the fruit to the blossom, without taking any account of the germination of the seed, or the underground winding of the root.¹

It is certain that, though the financial derangement powerfully aided the preachers of revolt, and though their efforts were not met by any adequate vigour on the part of those who administered the power of the government, yet these were far enough from being the cause of the Revolution. The apostles of change found more powerful coadjutors and more active and ample elements of mischief in the great abuses which prevailed both in the Ecclesiastical and the Civil institutions of the country. A church endowed with above five millions of revenue from tithes alone, and with nearly half the land in the kingdom, assigned only a wretched pittance of twenty pounds a-year to the parochial or working clergy, while all the rest was a prey to the vices of a luxurious, an idle, and a dissolute hierarchy. The landed property of the country was so unequally divided that one-third of it alone was in the hands of the lay commonalty, the church and the nobles possessing all the rest. The taxes were so unequally distributed that the largest of them all (the *Taille*), yielding between seven and eight millions, fell wholly upon the peasantry, neither church nor nobles paying a farthing towards it; and it was calculated that if an acre of land afforded three guineas of gross produce, nearly two went to the revenue, eighteen shillings to the land-

¹ Edinburgh Review, vol. 1, p. 7.

lord, and a crown only remained to the cultivator. In England Mr. A. Young used to reckon that the cultivator enjoyed three-fourths of the produce, while in France he had but a twelfth part; placing him in a situation nine times less advantageous. The grievances arising from the feudal system, and which were felt far more severely in France than in any other feudal kingdom, completed the distress of the people, affecting them both in their subsistence, in their comforts, and in their pride. Nor can it be doubted that, upon a high-spirited people like the French, with minds peculiarly susceptible of affront, the mental degradation which these feudal distinctions inflicted was more galling than any actual suffering which in their material comforts they had to endure. It is highly probable that the peasant felt more vexed at seeing the lord's pigeons trespassing on his crops, without the power of destroying them, knowing that the lord might not possess an acre of land,¹ than he did from paying a tithe of that crop to the Church and a third to the landlord; and the statute labour (*corvée*) which he always had to perform, must have harassed him incalculably more than a much heavier burthen shared with the feudal lord. Accordingly, of all the changes effected by the Revolution, there was none which went more home to every Frenchman's bosom than the famous decree, sweeping away all feudal privileges. The vote of the Assembly on the 4th of August diffused joy over all France, such as perhaps no other act of legislative power ever excited. It may be said, without a figure of speech, to have raised one universal shout of exultation through the whole expanse of that vast and populous country. The language applied by Mr. Burke to the memorable proceedings of that night, and which termed it the "St. Bartholomew of the privileged orders," was employed by but a very few, and did not express the sentiments prevailing even among the members of those orders themselves, from whom indeed the proposition mainly had proceeded.

Just half a century after these events I happened to be travelling in a remote district of Provence, when, reposing in the heat of the day under a porch, my eye was attracted by some placards, whose letters were preserved by the great dryness of that fine climate, though they had been there for fifty years. Those papers were the official promulgation of the several decrees for secularizing the clergy, abolishing the monastic orders, and abrogating all feudal privileges, signed by the several Presidents of the Assembly, Bureau de Puy,² Camus, and Sieyes. The incident is exceedingly trivial in itself; but I shall not easily forget its effect in carrying me back to the great scenes of the Revolution, ere yet its path had been stained

¹ The *drotte de Colombier* was wholly dependent on the seignory, and might belong to a lord who had no property in land: the actual owner had it only in a very limited extent. — *Political Philosophy*, part 1, chap. xiii.

² Afterwards confined at Olmutz with La Fayette.

with blood, while virtuous men might honestly exult in its success, and the friends of their species could venture to hope for the unsullied triumphs of the sacred warfare waged with long-established abuses. The past seemed connected with the present, and the mighty consequences visible all around which had flowed from the changes recorded in those few lines, appeared to arise, as it were, before the sight out of their causes. Nor must it be forgotten that the perils of the tempest having happily passed away, the atmosphere which it had cleared was breathed in a pleasing reflection that the region over which its fury had swept was now flourishing in unprecedented prosperity, for which the price paid had assuredly been heavy, but not too heavy compared with the blessings it had purchased.

Hitherto we have only considered the proceedings of the National Assembly itself; but that memorable body was not the only organ of public opinion and popular feeling, nor were its deliberations entirely free and uncontrolled. As soon as parties began to form themselves within its circle, appeals to the people out of doors were the natural consequence, each seeking to gain the weight arising in revolutionary times from popular support. At first the press alone was the channel through which the party leaders sought to influence public opinion. The religious feelings of the people were next appealed to; but the tendency of the clergy to support the ancient institutions, and the course of hostility to the Church so early pursued by almost all parties in the Assembly, soon brought such feeble and roundabout appeals to a close; and a more summary and effectual mode of agitating was discovered. Clubs were formed, at which men not belonging to the Assembly, as well as deputies, met to discuss the topics of the day, and especially the proceedings of their representatives. These meetings were at first private and not numerous; soon they became better attended and were much frequented by the deputies themselves; then their doors were flung open to the people. The earliest association of this kind was formed by the deputies from Brittany. When the National Assembly was removed from Versailles to the capital, the club, becoming more numerous, held its meetings at the Jacobin Convent in the Rue St. Honoré, and admitted as members many persons not belonging to the National Assembly. Perceiving that its influence upon the Assembly was considerable, the Club now endeavoured to rule the municipality or Town-Council of Paris, a body always possessed of great influence, from the large revenues at its disposal, and the great number of persons in its constant employ for the management of those revenues, as well as of the Metropolitan Police. The Jacobin Club, as it was now termed, extended its influence to the provinces, and formed every where affiliated societies or clubs which corresponded with it, took their tone from its debates, and exercised in each town an influence like its own.

Dissension, however, broke out in the mother society itself. The more moderate men, with Lafayette and Sieyes at their head, retired to form an association of their own, which they termed the Club of '89, while Lameth and Barnave directed the proceedings of the Jacobins. The new Club chiefly influenced the Assembly; the Jacobins always made their appeal to the people. The Royalist party soon attempted a similar policy, first forming a Club called the "*Impartiaux*," which had no success; then one termed the "*Monarchique*," which was so much better attended that it excited the jealousy of the Parisian mob, gave rise to tumults, and was shut up at the beginning of the year 1791 on that account by the police, which thought it just and reasonable to punish the party assailed, because those who attacked it had been guilty of some violence.

The Jacobins now underwent another change; the Lameths and Barnaves, unwilling to push matters to extremity, formed a new club, called the *Feuillans*, from the convent at which they met; and the direction of the Jacobins fell into the hands of Pétion and of Robespierre. But there were some who deemed these men and their followers not sufficiently favourable to extreme courses. Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine, seceded to form a more violent club; which met at the Convent of the *Vieux Cordeliers*, and took from thence their name. Among these different clubs, the Jacobins exercised the greatest influence both over the Assembly, the municipality, and the people at large; but all of them, by their unceasing agitation, kept the people in a constant ferment of disquiet; all of them, by their overbearing conduct, kept the deliberations of the Assembly under a control as indecent as it was pernicious; all of them prepared the materials of a combustible train, which a spark might at any time fire into a general explosion. Unhappily the Assembly did not present from the first a firm and determined aspect of resistance, so as to secure for itself the unbiassed freedom of discussion and of decision. But the first Assembly had far less to suffer from the interruption of the multitude than the second and the Convention afterwards had to endure.

It was to be remarked that the total number of those who frequented and composed the clubs was really far from being formidable. Thus 1500 was the whole body which usually composed the Jacobin meetings—a number quite inefficient to overcome either the constituted authorities of the capital, or the mass of its inhabitants, though truly formidable as a band of active agitators; for it must be remembered that all those men were demagogues and intriguers—men heated with enthusiasm, or agitated by the love of change, or prompted by mere desire of mischief; and as for their debates, the meetings were far too numerous for anything like discussion; so that when they made the proceedings of the legislature the subject of their deliberation, every night, as soon as the Assembly had adjourned, nothing could be heard but violent invective against some

members, and exaggerated praise of others, ending in a resolution, carried by acclamation of the assembled mob, to excite some tumult among the multitude, in order either to further or to obstruct the course of the national councils. The more sober-minded and respectable classes of the community held aloof from all such proceedings. The great majority of the tradespeople, the shopkeepers, the artisans, even the bettermost labourers, and almost all the proprietors, or persons of fixed means, took no part in what was going on, but regarded the acts of the legislature with interest, and the violence of the clubs with silent dread; while the mere rabble, which had nothing to lose, and never reflected on questions which they were too ignorant to understand, were—either from love of confusion and its sister, plunder, or from mere heat of uninformed but easily excited fancy and feeling—the ready tools of the clubmen, as often as a demonstration of mob force was wanted, in order to overawe the Government, or determine the conduct of individuals. It became thus clear that a small minority was enabled to rule the multitude, and influence the people of the capital. A similar force was exerted by the provincial clubs upon the people of the towns; and the influence exerted on the deliberations of the Assembly was the power of a small but active body, who had thrown off all regard to order or moderation, and who were devoted to whatever most worked for great changes, with an audacity to which fear was as much a stranger as principle, or prudence, or discretion.

When the National Assembly had destroyed the greater evils of which the people complained, and had formed a constitution upon the principles of a mixed or limited monarchy, they voluntarily stripped themselves of their functions, abdicated their power, and resigned into the hands of the people the high trust which had been delegated to them. Such a course was quite fitting, and indeed was the inevitable consequence of a new constitution being established. But there was coupled with the dissolution of the Assembly a provision unexampled in the history of human folly, and which nevertheless was adopted almost without discussion, and by general acclamation. It was declared that no one of the members of the first Assembly should be capable of being elected to the second; and the consequence was that every man of weight and experience, all those whose capacity and integrity had most recommended them to the confidence of their fellow-citizens, whose trustworthiness had been brought to the test of experience, and whose opinions had become known to the world, were excluded from the body which was called to work the new constitution, and to make a code of municipal laws for France. Unknown, inexperienced, untried men were alone suffered to execute the most important functions that mortals can perform, and in circumstances of the greatest difficulty. The result answered to the expectations which all reasonable men had formed. The conduct of the legislative body was that of an inexperienced multitude;

wholly under the control of the most violent parties out of doors, unable to maintain its own independence, and incapable even of preserving the decorous appearance of a senate in its own hall, as often as the mob rushed into its presence.

But the bad constitution of the new Assembly was produced not more by the absurd rule excluding all the former members, than by the other means which the authors of that rule used to fill it with the creatures of their faction. The clubs, especially the more powerful one of the Jacobins, were the instigators of Robespierre's motion for the exclusion; and they assured themselves that its result would be to throw into their hands the whole elections of the new legislature. Accordingly they pursued a course of agitation and canvass with the unceasing activity which is only known to popular bodies, with the boldness which even they only possess in the troublous times of revolutionary excitement, and with a perseverance unusual to popular bodies even in those times. The mother club of Paris disposed of all the elections there,¹ and the affiliated societies in the departments exercised equal sway over the provincial returns. The influence of the clubs therefore, but especially of the Jacobin Club, was prodigiously augmented by the general election; and over the new Assembly they exercised an almost unlimited control. In proportion to the obscurity and insignificance of the newly-elected deputies was the importance of those who had obtained the whole confidence of the country by their great exploits in the former Assembly. That weight must have been constantly felt to bias the deliberations of their unknown and nameless successors, had no means been provided of bringing it to bear directly and substantially upon the proceedings of the legislative body; but the clubs, in which they continued to debate all questions before the people, and with the greatest publicity, seconded by the press, rendered their influence altogether irresistible. If Robespierre, in proposing their exclusion from the new Assembly, had no other design than the avowed object of extending the popular power, and purifying the legislature from all personal and party taint, nothing can be considered more absurd than the scheme; but if his plan was to make the Assembly the mere instrument of a few men who had borne sway in the old, and to place the whole powers of the state in the hands of a few agitators,

¹ It must be confessed that frequently the French people displayed in their elections a regard for their principles, and a sense of gratitude towards public benefactors, which we in vain look for among the people of our own country. No man of any eminence in the two first Assemblies was excluded from a seat in the Convention, or Council of Five Hundred; and if any one lost his election in the place of his own department, some other was sure to choose him. To Carnot the extraordinary honour was paid of no less than fourteen places returning him to the Council of Five Hundred. In England, let the man who has rendered the most valuable services in Parliament, and shown himself the best qualified to discharge the important duties of a representative, lose his seat by any accident, and, for want of funds and of aristocratic support, he may reckon on being left out altogether. No other place feels a call to return him.

acting through the mob of Paris, the project must be allowed on all hands to have been wisely and warily conceived, and certainly its success was complete.

Fully to perceive the obscurity of the men into whose hands the legislative power was now nominally committed, we have only to look at the official reports of the debates during the month of October, 1791, when the new Assembly met. Forty-three members spoke in the second meeting: of these the names of sixteen only are given; the remaining twenty-seven are in blank, the reporters having been utterly unable to name them; they are all called *Monsieur*..... In the third sitting twenty-seven spoke, and twenty are recorded anonymously. The temper of the body, moved entirely by the Jacobin Club, may be ascertained with almost equal accuracy from the proceedings which first were taken. The titles of *Sire* and *Your Majesty* were refused to the King, the first magistrate under the constitution which they had just sworn to uphold; and a seat was allotted to him in the Chamber of the size, form, and elevation of the President's! The childish nature of these measures, while it conveyed a notion of the petty minds that were now ruling France, could not conceal from the eye of the observer the evil spirit which guided their deliberations.

The power of the clubs, and especially of the Jacobins, now rose in proportion to the obscurity and insignificance of the men thus unknown who led the deliberations of the Assembly. But it was not by merely holding their nightly meetings, and giving vent to the most violent sentiments in their inflammatory harangues, that the Jacobins obtained so uncontrollable an influence. These meetings, no doubt, of themselves were sufficient to bring into complete discredit the proceedings of the Assembly, because they were attended by the ablest and most popular men in public life, and their debates naturally excited far more interest than those of the obscure Assembly. In this country the Parliament has always found it necessary, for the maintenance of its own superiority and importance, possibly for preserving its existence, to put down with a strong hand every rival body. Accordingly, in 1817, when a convention was assembled, of delegates to sit in London, discussing public measures, and about to publish reports of their debates, the Parliament passed an Act declaring such a meeting unlawful, as had been done formerly by the Irish Parliament, and since the Union by the British Parliament, with respect to Ireland. The ground of the apprehensions which led to these measures was the consciousness that, independent of the direct authority of the legislature derived from its actual power, its weight with the people depends, at least in modern times, upon its debates; and that a greater portion of that weight than it could afford to lose would inevitably be gained by the rival body. In Paris the Assembly was weakened, and all but suspended, by the operation of the same causes in the proceedings of the Jacobin Club;

but though these might have, in the end, proved destructive to the Assembly, the Jacobins were not content to await the result of so slow a process of discredit. They determined on keeping alive the direct authority of the Assembly, and using it as their instrument. They assumed, therefore, the tone of superiority, and used the language of dictation. Their resolutions were communicated by deputations at the Assembly's bar; but they had recourse to other measures for the purpose of giving weight to their representations, and overawing at once the executive and the legislative functions of the state. The municipality of Paris was under the control of the club; and the mob, chiefly through that body, whose funds were large, and whose servants were very numerous, were so completely at the club's disposal that it could, upon any occasion, bring into the field a force of thousands, among whom were many desperate men, ready at all times for every extremity of sanguinary violence. The greatest outrages were indeed, at first, not committed in the capital, but by the affiliated societies, chiefly in the south of France. Alarming disturbances broke out, particularly at Nismes, where the Catholics and Protestants came into collision, exasperating, by their religious fanaticism, the violence of political faction; and a great number of lives were sacrificed to the fury of the contending parties. The amount of this slaughter is differently stated, but no account reduces it below several hundreds; and the Assembly, acting under the control of the mother club, did not bring to punishment some atrocious miscreants whose cannibal ferocity had been proved before it, but suffered them, after a slight examination, to return, and renew the same horrors upon the scene of their former crimes.

It appears from various unsuspected sources of information that the leaders of the extreme parties were fully sensible of their having only an inconsiderable numerical force compared with those who adhered either to the ancient order of things, or the new and mixed constitution. The republican party formed a very inconsiderable minority everywhere, though in Paris they had a following among the literary and scientific classes, and among the lower orders, ever ready for change and prone to fancy that all confusion must benefit them. But the party of the Gironde, the earliest to declare for a republic, were all along conscious of their weakness in point of numerical strength, and the necessity of overawing the majority by strong demonstrations of physical force. Even after this had produced its effect in silencing opposition, and attracting that portion of the multitude which in civil broils is always ready to side with the more powerful party, we find the Republican leaders confessing with bitterness of spirit that they had but a small proportion of the people with them. After the overthrow of monarchy, it was a saying of Barrère, "*Il y a une république—il n'y a pas de républicains.*"—One of the Gironde (Soulavie) boasted that his party "had defeated the wishes of the country on the 10th of August with three thousand

workmen."—When Pétion was declaring that there were but five Republicans in all France, Collot d'Herbois and Merlin de Thionville in an altercation with him exclaimed, "Nous avons fait le dix d'Août sans vous, et nous allons faire la république contre vous."—As late as July 3, 1791, we find Merlin de Douai speaking of the abolition of royalty with horror as meaning "a frightful civil war," and arguing on the utter impossibility of forming a republic in an extensive country. (*Mém. de Lafayette*, iii, 383.)—Danton, in his address to the Council of Ministers upon the measures to be taken for the defence of the country after the allies had taken Longwy, and were cannonading Verdun (31st August, 1792), used these remarkable expressions: "Vous ne pouvez pas vous dissimuler l'extrême minorité dans l'État du parti qui veut la république." (You cannot conceal from yourselves the very insignificant minority of the party in the country which is for a republic.)—His inference from thence was that terror alone would gain the day. "Il faut faire peur aux Royalistes. Effrayez-les!"—On the eve of the too memorable days of September, he followed up this counsel with these ever-to-be-remembered words: "Pour vaincre, que faut-il? De l'audace! Encore de l'audace! et toujours de l'audace!—et la France est sauvée."¹

[Upon this principle the Jacobins and other leaders of the extreme party faithfully acted. The Gironde, composed chiefly of deputies from that district and thence deriving their name, were men of respectable character, averse for the most part to violent proceedings, much connected with the press, of a speculative and literary cast, disliking, even despising all popular associations, but of a blind fanaticism in favour of their own political opinions. At first they are supposed not to have favoured republican courses, chiefly from their unpopular tastes and habits. But, whether from finding themselves without any support with any portion of the community if they maintained their merely constitutional doctrines, or from the natural tendency of those doctrines when embraced with fanatical zeal to merge in republicanism, certain it is that they soon became the chief patrons of those extreme views which sought the destruction of royalty; and though disinclined to all excesses, were fain to call for so much violence as might silence their adversaries, giving the minority that power through terror which they wanted by the force of reason, or on the balance of numbers. Accordingly they actively joined in a very indecent attack both upon the Assembly and the Palace which the republican mob made on the 20th of June, when they marched armed through the hall of the former, and, forcing their entrance into the courts and chambers of the latter, compelled the unhappy monarch to recognize the power of the mob by wearing the red cap, and all but violated the sanctity of his person. The virtual destruc-

¹ For what reason I know not, the most remarkable words, "*et la France est sauvée*," are left out by most authors. The debate in the '*Moniteur*' gives them as in the text.

tion of the monarchy soon followed ; for on the 10th of August the government had not the vigour, or Pétion, the mayor, and other heads of the police, had not the honesty, to prevent an armed mob of many thousands from occupying the palace and massacring the Swiss guards, whom Louis had with inconceivable folly persisted in retaining about his person, without having the firmness to use them in his defence.

The imprisonment of the royal family and the calling a National Convention, which at its first sitting established the Republic, were the immediate consequences of that memorable day. Yet a few weeks before, sixty-nine out of the eighty-three departments into which France was then divided, had declared themselves friendly to the existing and moderate monarchical constitution; and only two days before the capture of the Tuileries by the mob, a trial of strength between the parties in the Assembly, on the motion for Lafayette's impeachment, who had openly declared against extreme measures, gave the moderate party a majority of four hundred and six over two hundred and twenty-four voices. When the blow was struck, even before the new elections, these moderate men had disappeared, and the Convention, containing many members of the Legislative Assembly, with all the most eminent of the first or Constituent, was forced to follow with blind deference the councils of the republican leaders, or rather to obey the dictation of the Jacobin Club.

Here let us pause, and respectfully giving ear to the warnings of past experience as whispered by the historic muse, let us calmly revolve in our minds the very important lessons of wisdom and of virtue applicable to all times, which these memorable details are fitted to teach.

In the *first* place they show the danger of neglecting due precautions against the arts and the acts of violent partisans working upon the public mind, and of permitting them to obtain an ascendant, by despising their power, or trusting to their being overwhelmed and lost in the greater multitude of the peaceable and the good. The numbers of the ill-intentioned may be very inconsiderable; yet the tendency of such extreme opinions, when zealously propagated because fanatically entertained, is always to spread; their direction is ever forward; and the tendency of the respectable and peaceable classes is ever to be inactive, sluggish, indifferent, ultimately submissive. When Mr. Burke compared the agitators of his day to the grasshoppers in a summer's sun, and the bulk of the people to the British ox, whose repose under the oak was not broken by the importunate chink rising from the insects of an hour, he painted a picturesque and pleasing image; and one accurate enough for the purpose of showing that the public voice is not spoken by the clamours of the violent. But unhappily the grasshopper fails to repre-

sent the agitator in this, that it cannot rouse any one of the minority to the attack; while the ox does represent but too faithfully the respectable majority, in that he is seldom roused from his ruminating half-slumber till it is too late to avert his fate.

But, *secondly*, it is not merely the activity of agitators that arms them with force to overpower the bulk of the people—their acts of intimidation are far more effectual than any assiduity and any address. We see how a handful of men leading the Paris mob overturned the monarchy, and then set up and maintained an oligarchy of the most despotic character that ever was known in the world, all the while ruling the vast majority of a people that utterly loathed them, ruling that people with an iron rod, and scourging them with scorpions. This feat of tyranny they accomplished by terror alone. A rabble of ten or twelve thousand persons occupying the capital overawed half a million of men as robust, perhaps as brave, as themselves; but the rabble were infuriated, and they had nothing to lose; the Parisian burghers were calm, and had shops, and wives, and children; and they were fain to be still, in order that no outrage should be committed on their property or their persons. The tendency of great meetings of the people is two-fold—their numbers are always exaggerated both by the representations of their leaders¹ and by the fears of the bystanders; and the spectacle of force which they exhibit, and the certainty of the mischief which they are capable of doing when excited and resisted by any but the force of troops, scares all who do not belong to them. Hence the vast majority of the people, afraid to act, remain quiet, and give the agitators the appearance of having no adversaries. They reverse the maxim, whose is not against us is with us, and hold all with them whom they may have terrified into silence and repose. That this effect of intimidation is prodigious, no one can doubt. It acts and reacts; and while fear keeps one portion of the people neutral and quiet, the impression that there is, if not a great assent to the agitators, at least little resistance to them, affects the rest of the people until the great mass is quelled, and large numbers are even induced by their alarms partially to join in the unopposed movement.

But, *lastly*, it behoves us to consider how powerful a voice is raised by these facts in condemnation of the sluggish, the selfish, the pusillanimous conduct of those who, by their acquiescence and neutrality, arm a despicable and unprincipled minority with absolute power. And assuredly a warning, as well as a condemnation, proceeds from the same view of the facts; for nothing can be more short-sighted than the policy of those timid or inactive persons who suffer themselves, for the sake of present ease and safety, to be deterred from performing their duty to the community. How deeply blameable were the respec-

¹ The Irish demagogues speak of addressing three and four hundred thousand persons in places where the whole population amounts to less than half the number.

table classes of the French capital in preferring their quiet to their duty, and making no head against the clubs and their mob! But how heavy a penalty did they pay for the momentary repose which their cowardice purchased! The reign of terror, under which no life was secure for a day; the wholesale butcheries both of the prisoners in September, and by the daily executions that soon followed; the violence of the conscription, which filled every family with orphans and widows; the profligate despotism and national disasters under the Directory; the military tyranny of Napoleon; the sacrifice of millions to slake his thirst of conquest; the invasion of France by foreign troops—pandours, hussars, cosacks, twice revelling in the spoils of Paris; the humiliating occupation of the country for five years by the allied armies, and her ransom by the payment of millions;—these were the consequences, more or less remote, of the reign of terror, which so burnt into the memory of all Frenchmen the horrors of anarchy as to make an aversion to change for a quarter of a century, the prevailing characteristic of a people not the least fickle among the nations, and to render a continuance of any yoke bearable, compared with the perils of casting it off. All these evils were the price paid by the respectable classes of France, but especially of Paris, for their unworthy dread of resisting the clubs and the mob in 1792.

Among the lessons taught by the French Revolution I have not mentioned the obvious one which it inculcates upon all rulers not to disregard the people's rights, nor withhold such reforms as the people have a title to expect, and as the state of the national institutions demands. For this is the inference from the first stage of the great event, and not from that last consummation which we have been more immediately occupied with. The power of the clubs and the Paris mob did not at all rest upon the refusal of the Government to give whatever improvements were required by the state of France. No pretext could be urged on any such ground either to justify or to palliate the enormities of those who acted in the sanguinary scenes, or the pusillanimity of those who permitted them to usurp and to abuse supreme power. The utmost latitude had been given to reformation in every branch of the state long before any attempts were made to subvert the constitutional government; and the success of those attempts had nothing whatever to do with the views or the grievances of Reformers, or with any complaints of the people.

We have now traced the establishment of a system of intimidation to its real sources, the numerical weakness of the Republican party, and their determination to govern the country in spite of the opinions and the wishes of the bulk of the community. They thus succeeded in overthrowing the monarchy, and establishing a repub-

lic in its place ; but the inevitable consequence of this victory speedily followed. No sooner were they in full and almost undisputed possession of power than the temper and ambition of individual leaders, seconded by the violence or by the subserviency of inferior persons, their followers, marshalled the Republican body in parties, thirsting for supremacy, animated with bitter, mutual hatred, and wholly unscrupulous about the means which they took to gratify the one passion by usurping the whole powers of government, or the other by destroying their rivals. The Convention was the governing body of the state : its numbers, between seven and eight hundred, were far too great for calm and deliberate discussion ; for, unless its proceedings had become regulated, like those of our own Parliament, by long usage, and its members had, like our representatives, acquired by practice the habits of orderly debate, such a body was unwieldy and incapable of sustained deliberation. Even as a legislature this defect was unavoidable, and intimately mixed up with its constitution. But much more was the number of its members wholly incompatible with the functions of a body which possessed the executive as well as the legislative powers, and even interfered with the judicial authority. Hence the want of a vigorous government, in the perils which surrounded the country both from foreign war and from financial embarrassment, rendered it absolutely necessary that the Convention should delegate its powers to smaller bodies ; and this led to the appointment of the Committees whose names have become so famous in the history of the times—the Committees of General Security and Public Safety (*De Sûreté Générale* and *De Salut Public*)—of which the latter soon assumed the whole executive power in the state. It consisted of nine, and afterwards of ten, members, among the most eminent of the Jacobin party.

Let it not, however, be supposed that the Convention was a body insignificant from its composition, like the Legislative Assembly. It was far too numerous for action, but it contained the most able and eminent men of the day. In the first place there were fifty-seven of the Constituent Assembly, including twenty-two of the most remarkable of its members—as Robespierre, Sieyès, Prieur de la Marne, Merlin de Douai, Grégoire, Barrère, Boissy d'Anglas. Then there were sixty-six of the Legislative Assembly, much less distinguished men, as might be expected, yet including four or five of eminence—as Condorcet, Merlin de Thionville. Then there were fifty-eight magistrates, some of whom were eminent—as Cambacérès, Bonnier, Rebecqui, Lareveillère-Lepaux, Roberjot—almost all respectable men ; seventy-seven advocates, including Danton, Guiton de Morveau, the celebrated chemist, Poulain Grandpré, Ricord, Thibaudeau, Billaud Varennes, Vergniaud ; twenty-two physicians, including Fourcroy, Lanthénas, Hardy, Eschasserieux, Dubouché, Bourgoing ; thirteen bishops, including Robert Lindet,

Grégoire, Thibault; five Protestant ministers, including Rabaud St. Etienne, Lasonne; nineteen men of letters, almost all of whom had been favourably known by their writings, but Lakanal, Collet d'Herbois, Chénier, Dupuis, Fréron, Fabre d'Eglantine, Mercier, were the most distinguished; to which must be added twenty-six who had become known for their merits, either as men of speculation or action; and in this last class were enrolled the names of Carnot, Barras, Cambon, Desmoulins, St. Just, Gasparin, Isnard, Legendre, Tallien, Dubois Crancé.

A body thus composed, and chosen by the nation, which though acting under the influence of the clubs and the mob, yet gave their confidence to the Deputies appointed, certainly possessed resources and power abundantly sufficient for governing the country with vigour; and it soon showed that these powers were entrusted to able hands. The judicious course taken of delegating the whole executive functions to Committees of small numbers, and the firmness with which the Convention's confidence and support was given to those Committees, is above all praise. Their plan of proceeding early adopted, that of making reports from these bodies, and raising discussions in the Assembly itself upon the subjects brought forward, had the effect of giving the executive power a constant support from the people, whose interest in the public proceedings was thus kept alive; and the Government acted, or seemed to act, as the organ of the community, while its vigour was proportioned to the narrow limits within which its powers were concentrated. The wonderful exertions made for the public defence, the progress of the national arms in foreign conquest, the facility with which the whole resources of the state were called forth and employed for the exigencies of its service, powerfully attest the genius which presided over the revolutionary councils, and the vigour which carried them into effect. The Convention was, like the Venetian aristocracy, the ruling power; but its authority was wielded by the Committee, acting like the Council of Ten, while the Revolutionary Tribunal supplied the Inquisitor's place. Happy, if no other motive had animated and actuated the system but a desire to defend France, or even to extend her dominions!—happy, if, with the force which the constitution bestowed, there had not continued to grow and overpower, that terror which had from the earlier times of the Revolution proved the mainspring of all its movements!

Very far otherwise was cast the lot of France under the Republican chiefs who now had clothed themselves with the supreme power to direct all her affairs. The system of intimidation which had raised them to their "bad eminence," was now pursued to retain it, by crushing first, next by exterminating, all the leading men among their rivals or their adversaries. But they began with the royal family; hoping to strike an universal terror into their opponents by the signal example of a king sacrificed to the prevailing

faction among his people; not, however, before they had issued a decree, unexampled in the history of the world, by which they promised the aid of their victorious arms to whatever nation chose to throw off the yoke of its rulers, and establish a republican government in the stead of its ancient monarchical institutions. It was thus the declared resolution of the French leaders not only to annihilate all opposition at home among the Royalist party, but to surround their new republic with similar dynasties, in order to perpetuate the domination of their revolutionary principles by rendering them universal.

But although the death of the King had been resolved upon by the Jacobin leaders, and every resource of the clubs and of the municipality was called forth to accomplish this purpose, the greatest difficulties were experienced in the Convention. To surmount these, attempts were made to prevent discussion, and come to an immediate vote. All means were resorted to for hampering the King in his defence. At last the speeches of the members were not permitted to be heard, but were ordered to be given in, written, that they might be read or printed. The able defence of the advocates, and the dignified demeanour of the illustrious victim, produced a great effect both on the Assembly and on the country at large. The Gironde party, which really had the majority in the Convention, were for the most part against a capital punishment; and if the vote had been taken on the sentence, before the vote upon the appeal to the Primary Electoral Assemblies, there cannot be a doubt that this appeal would have been carried in the event of a capital punishment being awarded in the first instance. But the leaders craftily prevented this result, which they foresaw, and the Convention, by a blunder perhaps unexampled in the proceedings of a great body of men acting in their deliberative capacity, suffered the question of the appeal to be decided before the facts were known, or the circumstances had occurred which were, calculated most imperatively to govern its decision. Hence the jealousy of the primary Assemblies and the consciousness that, except in Paris and one or two other great towns, the majority would have voted for an absolute and entire acquittal, induced a great majority to negative the appeal, although a considerable majority would, in all probability, have preferred even that prospect of entire acquittal to the sentence of death, had there been no other alternative. Against the appeal there declared 424 to 283; the vote having been unanimous against an absolute acquittal. The sentence of death, when the votes came to be analyzed, appeared to have been carried only by the majority of five, 721 having voted out of the 750 who composed the Convention.¹ There

¹ One account made the majority five *against*, instead of *for* the sentence; this was certainly erroneous. Another result obtained was the bare majority of one in its favour. The majority of five given in the text, is the result in which all are now well agreed.

cannot be a more striking proof how little the voice of the country at large went with the proceedings of the Republican leaders, than this large minority in an Assembly chosen under the powerful and universal influence of the clubs and the mobs, and sitting at Paris under the constant exertion of that influence in all its forms.

But the death of the King soon terminated all struggle between the moderate and the extreme parties, placing the former at the mercy of their adversaries in the Convention, and subjecting the Convention itself to the control of the clubs. The establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal paved the way for this soon after the execution of the King. A body of six, acting alternately three and three, as judges, was appointed by the Convention, to try, with the assistance of a jury chosen by the electoral bodies, and of a public accuser named by the Convention. The jurisdiction of this dreadful tribunal extended over all political offences, and the Convention, rather than the public prosecutor, put parties upon their trial before it. The punishment of death was immediately after decreed by law, against all acts, all publications, all writings, tending to restore the monarchy or attack the Republican government; and the superintendence of the public safety was then confided to the celebrated Committee, which has already been mentioned as soon engrossing the whole executive power of the State.¹

The Jacobins having the whole power of this Committee and of the Revolutionary Tribunal in their hands, delayed not to use it for the defeat, that is, the extermination of their opponents. After a struggle of a few months they succeeded in putting the Queen to death by a mock trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal. By a like proceeding they put Custine, one of their very best generals, to death for having surrendered Valenciennes, when it was in fact taken by regular siege if not by storm. They prevented a Royalist insurrection at Lyons by destroying a great part of that noble city and massacring many hundreds of its inhabitants. They procured the execution of the Gironde leaders, Brissot, Vergniaud, and twenty others; and they sacrificed in like manner to their thirst of vengeance and lust of power, some of the most eminent soldiers and philosophers of France, Luckner, Houchard, Bailly, Lavoisier, to which may be added Barnave, the successor of Mirabeau, as by far the greatest orator of the Assembly, and the virtuous and accomplished Rolands.

¹ *Salut public* has generally been rendered *public safety*; but the word was rather *salvation* of the public, and expressed, indeed, its eminent functions and extraordinary appointment, as if under a pressing exigency to rescue the State from perdition. It was appointed on the 6th of April, 1793, on the proposition of Isnard, one of the most able, daring, and enthusiastic of the Republican chiefs, and an adherent of the Gironde party, in whose proscription he shared, though he escaped death by flight. He was of a highly respectable family of Grasse, still among the first in that town. I have the pleasure of knowing them well, from living in their neighbourhood.

The destruction of the Brissotine or Gironde party left the Convention entirely under the power of the Jacobins; and it was now found that the Committee of Public Safety, while it ruled the State, exercising over the Convention an uncontrolled influence, had fallen under the power of Robespierre and two adherents, who proved his devoted partisans on all occasions, Couthon and St. Just. The other members of the Committee confined themselves each to his particular department: thus Carnot conducted the whole operations of the war, and with a success so brilliant, that the only legitimate influence possessed by the Committee rested upon the fame which they thus acquired in exalting the national glory. The terror which they inspired by the sanguinary proceedings of the Revolutionary Tribunal was no doubt the main source of their power. But it may well be questioned whether, without the victories of their armies on every part of their frontier from the Ebro to the Scheldt, they could have sustained their ascendancy; and it is certain that any great reverses, which should again have exposed the capital to the risk of invasion, would speedily have wrought their overthrow and opened men's eyes to the tyranny under which they were fain to crouch while danger was afar off.

Although Robespierre¹ was all-powerful in the Committee, resting as he did upon the Jacobin club, over which he ruled with an absolute dominion; and although the Committee exercised an equal sway over the Convention, which, however, gave its confidence to the genius and the boldness that directed all the executive councils, making the war an uninterrupted series of victories, there soon appeared among its members men, not belonging to the Committee, but eminent for their services in the Revolution, and distinguished for their capacity and disposition to assert their claims, and aspire to a share in the supreme power. It could not, indeed, be said that any regular party had been formed in opposition to the Committee of Public Safety, because the spirit of patriotism which generally prevailed, making men forget all but the interests of the country, that is of the revolutionary system, rendered all faction odious, and branded it with the name of treason. Yet the Committee did not contain all the great men of the day; and the exclusion of some soon produced its wonted effect of sowing the seeds of discontent, leading towards resistance on the one side, and jealousy tending to persecution on the other. While such men as Danton,²

¹ As his rise had throughout been gradual, even slow, and aided by no sudden strokes of boldness, nor furthered by any brilliant talents, he only became a member of the Committee about the end of July, having before the 26th of that month belonged to the Committee of General Defence, which afterwards merged in that of Public Safety.

² Danton's exclusion, however, was voluntary; he had declined the proposal to be named upon the Committee, and, sick of the excesses into which the Revolution was plunging, rather than alarmed at its prospects, had retired for some months to his native place, Arcis-sur-Aube.

Tallien, Camille Desmoulins, Bourdon de l'Oise were deprived of all share in the government, the triumvirate of Robespierre could not deem themselves secure. Accordingly, after the fall of the Girondé had been followed by continued trials and condemnations, terms almost convertible in those dismal times, when hundreds of victims had fallen a sacrifice to the dictator's thirst of power and dread of resistance, the kindlier nature of Danton, long outraged by such dreadful scenes, revolted, and Camille entirely joining him in these natural feelings, the tyrant became alarmed. An interview took place, at which their reconciliation was attempted by common friends, alarmed at so perilous an event as their open rupture must prove to the dominant party : Robespierre received Danton's representations with haughty reserve; showed no disposition to be cordially reconciled; indicated on the contrary an impression that the breach might widen, without any loss to his party; and left Danton with such a conviction of his doom being sealed, that he said he perceived his fate approaching, but warned Robespierre that it would draw after it his own destruction. A remarkable incident occurred at this meeting. When Danton spoke of the innocent lives that had been sacrificed to the system of terror, Robespierre coldly asked, "Et qui vous aura dit qu'un seul innocent a péri?"—to which Danton, turning to the friend who had accompanied him, said, with a smile, the bitterness of which must have made a deep impression on the relator, for all the histories, and memoirs, and treatises have noted it, "Qu'en dis-tu? Pas un innocent n'a péri!" ("There is for you! or, What say you to that? Not a drop of innocent blood has been shed!")

The sacrifice of Danton, Camille, and their friends soon after put the seal upon the tyrant's power, and completed the subjection of the whole Convention, whose members, terrified at the approach of death should they either differ or be suspected of differing with the triumvirate, for the most part ceased to attend, insomuch that of the seven hundred and fifty composing it, not above two hundred usually appeared in their places. The executions now reached the enormous amount of fifty and sixty a-day; the most marvellous levity was shown in condemning and executing even persons against whom not the shadow of a proof was offered; constantly by mere mistake one was taken for another; sometimes persons were hurried into the fatal cart which conveyed the victims to the scaffold, merely because the appointed numbers were not complete. But the vilest passions of individuals were also gratified, their malignant spite or their sordid avarice. It would be endless to recite the instances which abound of these things in this the darkest page of French history, which make even the days of St. Bartholomew assume a lighter aspect. Thus, the parties to a bill of exchange connected with counter-revolutionary proceedings were all brought before the tribunal, and all condemned to die in the mass.

M. Berryer, a celebrated lawyer, and father of the famous Carlist leader in our times, happened to call on a notary named Martin, a highly respectable man, wholly unconnected with politics. A few hours after he had seen him in his office, M. Berryer met the cart carrying its miserable lading to the place of punishment, and to his unspeakable horror saw M. Martin among the victims. He was executed. On inquiry it was found that his name had been appended to the bill to authenticate a notarial act—that is, the protesting of the bill—with which therefore he not only had no more concern than the paper-maker or ink-seller, who had furnished the materials of the instrument, but he actually had rather been concerned in a proceeding against its validity. All the parties to it had been condemned in their absence; and the only question put to M. Martin was whether he acknowledged his handwriting. On his answering in the affirmative, he was told that the sentence applied to him, and must be executed.¹ A respectable man, M. Frecot de Lantz, of eighty years old, bedridden for twenty years, and so deaf that he was wholly unable to hear the questions put at his trial, was condemned and executed for having conspired against the republic. The public prosecutor, Coffinhal, among other rude and revolting pleasantries, said to the jury, “Il faut en finir. Vous voyez bien qu’il conspire *sourdement*.”²

A wretch called Heron, a fraudulent bankrupt, who, driven to South America, brought back a fabricated order of the Spanish government for six thousand pounds, which no Paris banking-house would discount, denounced ten or twelve of the first bankers merely because they had refused to honour his forgery. Some were executed; others paid vast sums for their escape, Couthon declaring that the public “owed to Heron the discovery of some of the worst, because the wealthiest,³ conspirators;” and another member of the Convention protesting that he never knew a better revolutionist.⁴ For the escape of one banker, M. Magon de la Balue, an unknown person, bringing passports ready signed but in blank, demanded twelve thousand pounds. It was refused, and the miserable man against whom, except the miscreant Heron’s tales, there existed not a shadow of charge, much less proof, was hurried to the scaffold.⁵ The incidents are numberless of a similar malignant rancour, or sordid cupidity; and no doubt can remain of the facilities which the sanguinary course of the committee afforded for gratifying all such vile propensities. Then, as if the Revolutionary Tribunal afforded too little scope for the perpetration

¹ *Souvenirs de Berryer*, vol. i. p. 213.

² *Ibid.*, p. 203.

³ *Négotiantisme* was a known offence in the Reign of Terror, and meant to indicate the tendency of wealth towards regular and lawful government; just as *Modérantisme* was the offence of disliking anarchy, and violence, and blood.

⁴ *Souvenirs de Berryer*, vol. i. p. 168.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

of wholesale murder, new expedients of blood were devised. A law was promulgated to increase this number, by making four Revolutionary Tribunals sit at the same time, and condemning persons without hearing their defence. It had as early as October, 1793, been decreed that if any trial lasted three days and no sentence was passed, the tribunal might declare its conscience satisfied, close the proceedings, and pronounce judgment. In the June following came the consummation of injustice, the incredible law that if the tribunal was satisfied either with moral conviction or material proof, it might without evidence proceed to condemnation. Advocates were by the same infernal law denied to parties accused, for the reason assigned, that the patriotic jurors were the protectors of all patriots,¹ and that conspirators deserved no assistance! These laws soon raised the number of victims to seven and eight hundred in a month.²

The revolutionary mode of proceeding, when once adopted at Paris, was extended to the tribunals in the provinces. Indeed, we find the constitution of the revolutionary tribunal of Orange planned some weeks before the new system was established in the capital. These are the remarkable directions for its process—concise enough, and abundantly significant :—“ Ce tribunal jugera révolutionnairement, sans instruction écrite, et sans assistance de jurés. Les té-

¹ In Robespierre's handwriting the draught was found of one of these detestable laws. Its preamble sets forth the delays which had occurred from the difficulty of convicting eminent persons, and the scope thus afforded to aristocratic tumults and counter-revolutionary intrigues; and it gives as the ground of the new law, that “ It is at once absurd and contrary to the institution of the Revolutionary Tribunal to subject to eternal procedure crimes of which a whole nation is the denouncer, and the universe the witness.”—It then requires the president to open the fourth day's sitting with a question to the jury, “ Is their conscience sufficiently informed?” (*éclairée*), and on an affirmative answer, he is immediately to pronounce sentence. He is also peremptorily required to suffer no questions (*interpellations*), nor any other incident inconsistent with this law. (*Papiers inédits*, vol. ii. p. 1.)

² In April, May, June, July, 1793, the number of executions was only 41. In the five following months it had risen to 206,—viz. four times as many. In the three first months of 1794 it was 281, or above double that of the former period. But it then went on awfully increasing, so that in April it was 303; in May, 324; in June, 672; and in July, 895, without reckoning Robespierre and his party, executed at the end of that month. As many as 67 perished in one day—7th of July. It is a most remarkable fact that a very great proportion of the persons thus put to death were of the most obscure station, and many were women of very advanced age; nor can there be a doubt that the guillotine ministered to the cravings of personal and family cupidity, or spite. In the provinces, especially in the south, the same bloody scenes were enacted: the fiery temperament of the people increasing in those parts the violence of faction. Some places are noted for the fury with which the passions were inflamed. At Orange, near Aix, in Provence, the worst atrocities were perpetrated. The same place exposed Napoleon's life to imminent hazard when he made his retreat to Elba in 1814. In 1830, its people were so split into violent parties that each family was divided against itself. Nor can the traveller at this day fail to mark, as he but passes, the fierce aspect of its inhabitants. The atrocities, however, committed by the monster Carrier at Nantes, where the Loire was literally dyed with Royalist blood, have long attained the dreadful eminence of almost making the other cruelties of the time be forgotten.

moins entendus, les interrogations faites, les pièces à charge lues, l'accusateur public entendu, le jugement sera prononcé." * There is an entire omission of the defence, and of all evidence in exculpation.—(*Papiers Inédits*, vol. i. p. 101.) It is remarkable that, though the six members to compose this sanguinary court were carefully selected, with power to divide themselves into two courts for expediting their horrid business, not many days elapsed before some of them showed symptoms, if not of tenderness, yet at least of regard for justice, and reluctance to commit wholesale murder. The president, Fauvetz, writes to Payan, the national agent of the municipality of Paris, who suffered with Robespierre, that their proceedings, though affording a brilliant contrast with that of the Tribunal of Nîmes—having in six days sentenced 197 persons, which was more than they had done at Nîmes in as many months—were yet hampered and thwarted by the overscrupulous nature of three of their members; one of whom, Fonrosa, is too fond of forms, and though an "excellent person, yet somewhat short of the revolutionary point:" another, Meilleret, "utterly useless in the post he fills, so far as sometimes to acquit counter-revolutionary priests, and to require proofs of guilt, as in the ordinary courts of the old régime."—"God grant," ejaculates the pious chief judge, "that Ragot, Ternex, and myself, who are up to the right pace (*qui sommes au pas*), may not be taken ill! Should such a misfortune happen, the tribunal would only distil pure water, and be at best on a level with the ordinary courts of the country."

This account of the peculiar structure of Fonrosa's understanding, which made him slow in putting innocent men to death, drew from Payan a most warm, but affectionate remonstrance; which we find among the documents appended to Courtois's Report. After referring to his own long experience in such proceedings, he earnestly beseeches him to consider the entire difference between a revolutionary and an ordinary tribunal; that it is wholly immaterial to ask whether or not the accused has been heard patiently, and at length, in his defence; but only whether he is guilty or not: and that in considering this the judge's conscience is to stand in the place of all the old forms. He exhorts him not to be afraid of the innocent suffering, but only of the guilty escaping; affirming that whoever has not been for the revolution has been against it, and simply because he has done no public service: and he reminds him that whoever escapes punishment will one day be the death of many Republicans. In fine, he tells him, "You have a great mission to fulfil. Forget that nature has made you a man, and endowed you with feelings" (*Oublie que la nature te fit homme et sensible*):

* "This tribunal shall try in the revolutionary manner, without written indictment, and without jury. After hearing the witnesses, interrogating the accused, reading the documents in support of the charge, and hearing the public prosecutor, sentence shall be pronounced."

“remember that all those who affected to be wiser and more just than their colleagues were either crafty conspirators or weak dupes, unworthy of the republic; and choose between the love and the hatred of the people.” He closes this singular letter by professions of the purest esteem, which, he says, has dictated it, and by calling on his correspondent to read it over and over again (*sans cesse*), and “especially before trying the wretches whom he has to destroy.” —(*Rapport de Courtois*, p. 397.) Fonrosa’s answer to this letter, justifying himself, would seem to show that there was but a slender foundation for the charge made against him. He only appears to have required that some note should be kept of the names and designations of the parties tried, of the heads of the charges, and of the principal points of the evidence. The small number of clerks, however, rendered this a serious interruption to the work of blood; and hence the impatience of all such formalities testified by the Chief Judge, to whose letter of complaint we have adverted.

It is needless to multiply examples; but the proceedings at Lyons require a few words. We have, among many other records of these tragical scenes, the correspondence of the principal actor in them, Collot d’Herbois. To some of the letters Fouché’s name is also appended; but he has, in private at least, positively denied the authenticity of the subscription, as we shall afterwards see in Lord Stanhope’s valuable note.

The accomplishment of Collot’s grand object, the destruction of Lyons, is obstructed by the vast number of the inhabitants—150,000; and both he and Couthon are found planning the dispersion of some 100,000 of them over the country, where they might mingle with the Republican population, and become partakers of its civic virtues. However, as far as man could act in such circumstances, Collot boasts of his progress; and he lays down his principles:—“We have revived the action of a Republican justice,” he says, “prompt and terrible as the will of the people! It must strike traitors like the lightning, and only leave their ashes in existence! In destroying one infamous and rebellious city, you consolidate all the rest. In causing the wicked to perish, you secure the lives of all generations of freemen. Such are our principles. We go on demolishing, with the fire of artillery and with the explosion of mines, as fast as possible. But you must be sensible that, with a population of 150,000 inhabitants, these processes find many obstacles. The popular axe cuts off twenty heads a-day, and still the conspirators are not daunted. The prisons are choked with them. We have erected a Commission, as prompt in its operations as the conscience of true Republicans trying traitors can possibly be. Sixty-four of these were shot yesterday on the spot where they had fired on the patriots; two hundred and thirty are to fall this day in the ditches where their execrable works had vomited death on the Republican army. These grand examples will have their effect

with the cities that remain in doubt ; where there are men who affect a false and barbarous sensibility, while ours is all reserved for the country."¹

Such, in Paris and the provinces, were the proceedings of the Reign of Terror, while the triumvirate, Robespierre, Couthon, St. Just, bore sway, until at length the discovery of a list, in which many deputies were proscribed and marked for execution, roused the Convention from its slumber of fear, overthrew the triumvirate, and restored something like security and freedom to the legislature and the people of Paris, while the analogous proceedings of the provincial clubs and tribunals were also suspended.

We may now pause awhile to contemplate the character, intellectual as well as moral, and to scan the views of the singular men who played the chief parts in that terrible drama, of which we have been observing the successive scenes. And of one thing we may rest fully assured, that they commit a great mistake who ascribe, as was very generally done at the time, no motives but those of mere sanguinary cruelty or insane ambition to their conduct. That with most of them their proceedings degenerated into such courses—that the more savage and selfish parts of their nature finally prevailed, and bore them away from every humane affection or virtuous principle, may be very true ; and yet most of them began with being the dupes of exaggerated patriotism and public spirit, the sport of a political and philosophic fanaticism ; and it was only after these dangerous excesses had steeled their minds against the ordinary impulses of our nature, that they gave themselves up to the propensities of a more vulgar ambition, and indulged in the more common gratification of personal hatred or vengeance. That a familiarity with scenes of blood, both in the field and on the scaffold, had produced its natural effect in hardening the heart, and that the fanatical sentiments of enthusiasm had borne their appointed fruit, of making the sufferings and even extinction of others disregarded when they were the means working towards the end so vehemently desired, can nowise be doubted.

The records of the Reign of Terror bear constant witness to these positions. But perhaps no such testimony is stronger than that of the correspondence published after Robespierre's downfall in May,

¹ The admixture of private with public feeling is found in this, as in all the other pieces of the Jacobin correspondence ; and Robespierre, generally called "*Maximilien*," or "*Our dear Maximilien*," is the object of constant solicitude and tenderness.

"All those," continues Collot, "who have traversed the Revolution with a firm step (that is, unruffled by 'false and barbarous sensibility') are inseparably united together. It is the love of their country that cements the fraternal friendship which knits their hearts together. Give the assurance of my friendship, entire and unalterable, to your Republican family. Squeeze, in my name, Robespierre's hand. Your son, a good citizen, a happy father, already strong in the principles in which he has been brought up," etc. "What a satisfaction for Republicans, the fulfilment of these duties !"

1794 ; to parts of which I have already referred. The Committee of Public Safety had, according to its usual policy of having an emissary to aid or to control the national representative in every important place, sent M. Julien to Bordeaux, where Ysabeau was suspected of being lukewarm, and to Nantes, where Carrier had rendered himself remarkable for an unscrupulous excess of zeal—an excess, however, which does not appear to have created any very unfavourable feelings on the part of the executive government. We find this emissary writing confidentially to Robespierre respecting the monster Carrier and his atrocious murders. But not a word of execration finds or forces its way into his narrative. He speaks of Royalist soldiers butchered, and of the Loire flowing red with blood; but it is only to express his sorrow for the pestilence engendered by the heaps of corpses, and for the impediments occasioned to the navigation of the river. Whether it be that he dared not reprobate the acts of patriotic butchery, even in writing to his colleague, for fear his letter should be read, and expose him to the fury of zealous citizens, or that he really was callous to all feelings of humanity, needs hardly be inquired into; the inference is the same on either supposition.* The same silence is to be remarked in the correspondence respecting Collot d'Herbois's massacres at Lyons; or rather Julien brings it as a charge against Ysabeau that he had spoken disrespectfully of those celebrated *fusillades*.** A like remark arises upon a fact communicated by Lord Stanhope, which the reader will find in his interesting notes upon Fouché. When that famous revolutionary leader was denying his share in the proceedings at Lyons, and was reminded of the reports published in his name jointly with his associate Collot, his answer was that "to have merely contradicted his having the share ascribed to him in the massacres would have exposed him to destruction,"—that is, because it would have betokened a disapproval and repudiation of the honour intended to be done him.

But though all these scenes ended in perverting the nature of the actors, and even in some degree of the spectators, the chiefs of the revolution were originally of a better temper, and actuated by purer feelings. This is even, to a certain extent, true of Robespierre, the most remarkable of them all; but it is true of him in a very much lesser measure than of any other revolutionary chief except St. Just.

¹ *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez Robespierre*, vol. iii. p. 44. This work is of the deepest interest. When the triumvirate were overthrown at the revolution of the 9th and 10th Thermidor, there were found many papers in the repositories of Robespierre, St. Just, and others. A committee was charged to draw up a report, and Courtols made it to the Convention. It was printed in one volume. But in 1828 the suppressed papers were published in three volumes, with Courtols's Report.

² *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez Robespierre*, vol. iii. p. 27.

ROBESPIERRE.

It would be difficult to point out within the whole range of history, ancient or modern, any person who played so great a part as Robespierre with so little genius. Those who were not brilliant, whose parts were not such as dazzle the vulgar, and thus, by bestowing fame and influence, smooth the way to power, have generally possessed some depth of intellect, some mental force which compensated, and far more than compensated, the want of shining faculties ; or, if their intellectual endowments were moderate, they have by a splendid courage struck awe into the hearts of mankind ; or at least by extraordinary vigour and constitutional firmness of purpose, they have overpowered, though more slowly, all resistance to their will, and with constancy won their way to the head of affairs. Nor are instances wanting, and perhaps Henry IV. of France is the most remarkable, of amiable dispositions gaining the affections of men, and making up for the want of any very extraordinary gifts either of a moral or an intellectual kind. But in Robespierre we can trace not a vestige of any such kinds of excellence, if it be not that he was unremitting in his pursuit of aggrandisement, and had as much firmness in this regard as was consistent with a feeble and cowardly nature. Nor is the secret of his rise to be found in the circumstances of the times ; these were common to all candidates for power ; and he who outstrips all competitors must have some superiority over them, natural or acquired, to account for his success.

It may be admitted, in all probability, that his vices had in the peculiar crisis a chief part in the mastery which he obtained ; and his early possession of a secret, more imperfectly known to others, perhaps only to him in its entirety, was that which, when coupled with those great vices, enabled him to act his extraordinary part. He, from the dawn of the Revolution, saw with perfect clearness and precision the disposition of the multitude to be roused, their power when excited, and the manner in which most surely to excite them. He perceived with unerring certainty the magical effect of taking extreme courses, gratifying their disposition to excess, freeing them by removing all restraints, and, above all, avoiding the risk of quenching the flame by any interposition of moderate councils, any thwarting of the spirit that had been raised. The perfectly unscrupulous nature of his mind, the total want of all kindly or gentle feelings, the destitution of even common humanity

when the purpose of gratifying the propensity to violence was to be accomplished, and the superadded excitement of the war to make the mob first his tools, and then his slaves, enabled him to satiate that thirst, first of destruction, then of fame, which swiftly became a fiercer thirst of power, and, while it could hardly be slaked by any draughts of the intoxicating beverage, clothed him with the attributes of a fiend towards all who either would interrupt or would share his infernal debauch.

The frame of his mind was eminently fitted for sustaining as well as devising the part which he played. From his earliest years he had never been known to indulge in the frolics or evince the gaiety of youth. Gloomy, solitary, austere, intent upon his work, careless of relaxation, averse to amusement, without a confidant, or friend, or even companion, it is recorded of him that at the College of Louis le Grand, where he was educated with Camille, Fréron, and Le Brun, he was never seen once to smile. As a boy and a youth he was remarkable for vanity, jealousy, dissimulation, and trick, with an invincible obstinacy on all subjects, a selfishness hardly natural, a disposition incapable of forgiving any injury, but a close concealment of his resentment till the occasion arose of gratifying it, and till he dared to show it in safety. It would have been difficult to bring into the tempest of the Revolution qualities more likely to weather its fury, and take advantage of its force; but he lacked the courage which alone can enable any man long to "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm;" for his nature was essentially base and timid, the frame of his body corresponding to the paltriness of his soul. Nature had likewise given warning to the beholder by marking his aspect with singular ugliness and meanness, which the ravages of the small-pox rendered still more forbidding.

With these defects, and that entire want of generous, or kindly, or even ordinarily human feelings which they betoken or cause, he possessed some qualities which mainly contributed to his elevation, first from the obscurity of a not very eminent practitioner at the not very celebrated bar of Arras, to distinction in the Constituent Assembly; and afterwards from the position of a second-rate debater* to the supreme power in the state, which he wielded during by far the most critical period of French history in any age. His thirst, first of distinction to gratify his inordinate vanity, and then of power to feed the ambition that had grown up in so rank and poor a soil, was inordinate, and possessing his whole soul left no place for any rival principle of action, no avenue open to any natural feeling which might dispute for mastery with the ruling passion. From his earliest years, when the question was merely of vanity, this was his nature; and viewing all rivals, all obstacles, as only to be extirpated and destroyed, he would have killed, if he dared, the competitors for

* This underrating applies to his powers as a debater only. His eloquence was unquestionable as a speaker.

a college prize or a school reward, as remorselessly as he afterwards exterminated the Brissots, the Heberts, and the Dantons, who crossed the path of his ambition. Vanity often prepares the soil for ambition; but generally like a crop which is to be consumed before the more important growth begins, with which that rank weed seldom is seen to grow up. But the personal conceit of Robespierre kept pace with his love of dominion; affronts offered to it caused many of his murders; nay, its indulgence seriously affected his power, and it is more than probable hastened his downfall. For the festival in honour of the Supreme Being, the precursor of his fate, and a main assistance to his enemies, was wholly unnecessary for re-establishing religion, and, except ministering to his personal vanity, gained no object but that of exciting distrust and alarm among the infidel parts of the community, without at all reconciling the votaries of Christianity.

From the entire occupation of his mind by the prevailing propensity, proceeded, of course, his exclusive devotion to its gratification.¹ It may be questioned whether in the whole course of his life Robespierre was for an instant unoccupied with the subject—whether he ever wasted one thought upon any other. The effect of this absolute devotion is incalculable. It supplies many deficiencies; it gives force to very moderate strength of mind; it calls forth the whole resources of the individual; it nerves the faculties with a vigour for want of which far ampler powers are paralyzed; as an insignificant bullet fired from a gun will destroy, when a cannon-ball thrown by the hand falls innocuous at the feet of the object.

From the same exclusive devotion to the one pursuit of his whole existence arose also the utter disregard of all other gratifications, aided possibly by his extremely cold temperament. With the exception of wine, in which he at one period of his life indulged, in order, probably, to soothe his constitutional irritability, and assist the morbid digestion that shed a sallow hue over his repulsive features, he never was known to partake of any sensual indulgence.² But the austerity of the republican character, which he so greatly affected, also precluded all ordinary pleasures; and he carried this, which cost him nothing, to the same excess with most of his colleagues, excepting only that, in the article of dress, his petty personal vanity made him shun the squalid attire of the other Jacobins, and affect something of the old garb of good society. Nay, his room, a handsome *boudoir*, was filled with pictures, prints and busts of his

¹ My learned and able friend M. Lakanal, in his valuable notes upon his Colleagues of the Revolution, heads a few remarks on Robespierre with this line—

“Hoc genus est hominum cupiens præcellere cunctis;”

as if he deemed personal vanity the distinguishing characteristic of the dictator's nature.

² A connexion has been supposed to have existed between him and the daughter of the family with which he lodged; but the evidence of this is too slight to be relied on.

own frightful person; and he is supposed to have worn green spectacles for the purpose of concealing the timid movements of his eyes.¹ Avarice he had none, not because with his habits money was an useless incumbrance, for we often see the passion of acquiring keep such pace with that of hoarding wealth, that all use of the treasure so keenly sought after is out of the question; but avarice was no vice or weakness of his, and it would have been as hard to bribe him from his path with money as to make him compromise his principles, or assumed principles, for place.

He soon acquired, and even retained, the name so popular at all times, in revolutions so omnipotent, of "*Incorruptible*."² How came it to pass that while all, or nearly all, were equally careless of money; while the terrible Committee, with the disposal of uncounted millions, limited their whole salary and whole expenditure to eight shillings a-day, and all ended their lives in the greatest distress, he alone should be called the "*Incorruptible*?" The reason is to be sought for elsewhere than in the freedom from pecuniary corruption; for his possessing the feature common to them all never would have formed a mark of distinction. But as he had early perceived the power of the people—that is, the power of the multitude acting on or overawing the people; so had he observed almost as early the favour in their eyes of extreme courses; of unhesitating pursuit of one principle, without the least deviation to suit the temporary purposes of expediency, or the least temporizing to consult prudential views, whether of individual advantage or of public safety; and he saw that as who—

¹ *Mémoires de Barbaroux*, p. 68, give a similar account of his *boudoir*, but deny the statement of Helen Maria Williams, that his sight was good, and required no glasses.

² I have not thought it worth while in the text to make any remark upon the only pretence anywhere to be found of a charge against Robespierre's honesty in money matters. It is a letter printed in the Report of Courtois, as having been found among his papers; and it is evidently a fabrication. The reader will find it at p. 221, forming the lxi. piece of the Appendix; it is also given in the *Papiers inédits*, tom. ii. p. 156. It purports to be a letter from some one unknown, at some place also unknown, respecting funds supposed to have been entrusted to him for the purpose of facilitating Robespierre's escape. The first sentence convicts its author of gross and daring forgery. Who in such circumstances would do more than allude to the funds under his care? But the writer is made to say, "les effets que vous m'avez fait adresser pour continuer le plan de faciliter votre retraite dans ce pays-ci"—(the money you sent me in order to carry on the plan of facilitating your escape into this country). He then speaks of Robespierre as about to fly from a "theatre where he must soon appear and disappear for the last time;" and goes on to show him how near the scaffold the elevation to the chair of the Convention (probably meaning at the festival in honour of the Dely) had brought him. It proceeds thus: "since you have succeeded in providing yourself here with a sum (*un trésor*) sufficient to support you for a long time, as well as those for whom I have received money from you, I shall expect you impatiently, that we may laugh together over the part you will have played in a nation as credulous as it is fond of novelty." Surely a more gross and clumsy fabrication never was attempted, nor does its publication reflect credit either on the Government that published it, or the Report in which it appeared. The improbability of Robespierre's keeping such a letter in his repositories is of itself sufficient to destroy its credit.

ever most rigidly conformed his course to this canon, so whoever went further than all others, outbidding them in violence and in blindness to all the advantages of compromise—was sure to carry away the chief favour of the unreflecting multitude. By this view was his conduct always guided; and as the people were ever sure to find him foremost among the more violent, ever at the head of those who would sacrifice all considerations to the favourite maxims, falsely called the *principles* of the day—laying all prudence on the shelf—giving moderation to the winds—flinging peace to the dogs, the dogs of war—now crying, “*perish the colonies*,”—now, “*perish commerce*”—and ever ready to wade through blood, the best blood of France, towards the attainment of the darling equality and unbridled licence of the multitude—he was for this hailed as the “*Incorruptible*,” that no one could ever doubt on any question which side he would take, and no one could expect others to outstrip his zeal and determination.

There remain some remarkable proofs and illustrations of unquestionable authenticity (for they are under his own hand), of the extremes to which he had made up his mind, and the enmity which he bore to all the reputable classes of society. The correspondence of his emissaries in various quarters is filled with the like indications. Aristocracy, counter-revolutionary principle, royalism itself, appear not to excite more alarm and hostility than mere wealth; and hence *négociantisme* equally with *modérantisme* is taken for a sure symptom of *incivisme*, and places those who have it alike under grave suspicion. The design of a crusade against property, a general levelling of condition as well as an equality of all civil rights, has been often imputed to Robespierre, and apparently without sufficient foundation. It is certain that such a scheme, an agrarian division of property, was one of the main tenets of the Hebertiste or Cordelier party, against whom he made the greatest exertions, exertions which speedily led to their destruction. But his hatred of the middle classes, and constant appeals to the multitude against the *bourgeoisie*, can in nowise be doubted; and it forms the burthen of his song in many pieces found after his death. Thus, in a kind of civic catechism, we find the question, “Who are our enemies?” answered with, “The vicious and the wealthy.” Again, “What favours their attacks upon us?”—“The ignorance of the multitude, or lower classes” (*sans-culottes*). In another piece we find this doctrine—“Les dangers intérieurs viennent des bourgeois; pour vaincre les bourgeois il faut rallier le peuple—tout était disposé pour mettre le peuple sous le joug des bourgeois—ils ont triomphé à Marseille, à Bordeaux, à Lyon; ils auraient triomphé à Paris sans l’insurrection actuelle. Il faut que l’insurrection actuelle continue—il faut que le peuple s’allie à la Convention, et que la Convention se serve du peuple—il faut que l’insurrection s’étende de proche en proche sur le même plan; que les sans-culottes soient payés et restent dans

les villes. Il faut leur procurer des armes, les colérer, les éclairer.¹

Of the talent of Robespierre we have already spoken in general; but it remains to examine a little more in detail his claims of distinction as a speaker and a writer. There is some difficulty in separating the two characters, because in his time written speeches were far more frequently used than spoken; yet we are not left without proofs of his power as an orator.

It has been customary with contemporary authors, and especially with those of our own country, to rate his capacity very low; and some with whom I have conversed of his colleagues, represent him as a cold and very second-rate speaker (*médiocre*), whose oratory consisted in a tissue of common-places, with dissertations on virtue, crime, conspiracy, though with a prevailing vein of sarcasm and considerable power of epigram or antithesis. These have described him as very barren of ideas, and by no means possessing facility of composition—which indeed the manuscripts found on his death seemed to prove by the constant and repeated alterations that prevailed through them all. It is to be observed, on the other hand, that General Carnot expressly gave as one of the means by which he rose to power, his facility of speech and of composition: “D’abord (I remember he said) il avait les paroles à la main.” Nor can we rely much in opposition to this upon the undoubted fact that, when accused by Louvet and Barbaroux, he asked for a week to prepare his defence. The delay in all probability had a very different object from that of making his speech. He was willing that the impression produced by the charges, and by the ability shown in their support, should be allowed to wear out at a time when sudden resolutions were not so often taken as afterwards, and therefore he could safely postpone his defence; and above all he was most likely working with his faithful Jacobins, to defeat the accusation and carry him through, whatever might be the effect of the debates in the Convention.

It seems, however, that we are not left to conjecture on his powers as a speaker, even as a debater. Inferior he certainly was to the greatest who appeared in the Revolution, as Mirabeau, Barnave his successor, and Vergniaud, perhaps the highest of the three. But we have abundant proof of his coming very near them, at least in effective declamation, and proof that in readiness he was not easily surpassed. Let two instances suffice; but they are remarkable ones, and they are decisive.

1 “Our internal perils arise from the middle class; to overcome that class we must rally the people. Everything was prepared for subjecting the people to the yoke of the middle class; that class has triumphed at Marseilles, at Bordeaux, at Lyons; it would have triumphed at Paris but for the present insurrection. This insurrection must continue. The people must ally itself with the Convention, and the Convention must make use of the people. The insurrection must extend gradually on the same plan; the lower classes must be paid to remain in the houses; they must be furnished with arms, enraged, enlightened.”—*Papiers Inédits*, vol. II. pp. 13, 15.

Dupont, an adherent of the Lameth party, used insulting gestures towards him. He calmly said, addressing the chair, "M. le Président, je vous prie de dire à M. Dupont, de ne pas m'insulter, s'il veut rester auprès de moi." Then turning alternately to Dupont and the Lameths, he proceeded :

"Je ne présume pas qu'il existe dans cette assemblée un homme assez *lâche*, pour transiger avec la cour, sur un article de notre code constitutionnel (all eyes were fixed on the party of Lameth)—assez *perfide* pour faire proposer par elle des changements nouveaux, que la pudeur ne lui permettrait pas de proposer lui-même (much applause, and looks again directed towards Dupont and the Lameths)—assez *ennemi de la patrie* pour chercher à décréditer la constitution parce qu'elle mettrait quelque borne à son ambition ou à sa cupidité (more applause)—assez *impudent* pour avouer aux yeux de la nation qu'il n'a cherché dans la révolution que des moyens de s'aggrandir et de s'élever. Car, je ne veux regarder certains écrits et certains discours qui pourraient présenter ce sens, que comme l'explosion passagère du dépit déjà expié par le repentir. Non ; du moins nous ne serons ni assez stupides, ni assez indifférents, pour consentir à être le jouet éternel de l'intrigue, pour renverser successivement les diverses parties de notre ouvrage au gré de quelques ambitieux." Then raising his voice, "Je demande que chacun de vous jure qu'il ne consentira jamais à composer avec le pouvoir exécutif sur aucun article de la constitution sous peine d'être déclaré traître à la nation." The effect of this speech was electrical, as may well be imagined. The Lameth party had long been on the decline, and this proved their destruction.

The great struggle between the Mountain and the Gironde began with a debate in which Robespierre made a very successful attack upon them ; but Vergniaud's reply, notwithstanding the extreme applause which attended his adversary's, greatly exceeded it in power, and won over even many of the Mountain to his side. Very different was the result of the hot conflict between the same redoubtable chiefs on the famous 31st of May, 1793. While Robespierre was going on, "Non ! il faut purger l'armée ! Il faut"—Vergniaud impatiently interrupted him with "Concluez donc"—whereupon Robespierre instantly turned on him, and continued, "Oui ! je vais conclure, et contre vous !—contre vous, qui, après la révolution du 10 août, avez voulu conduire à l'échafaud ceux qui l'ont faite !—contre vous, qui n'avez cessé de provoquer la destruction de Paris !—contre vous, qui avez voulu sauver le tyran !—contre vous, qui avez conspiré avec Dumouriez !—contre vous, qui avez poursuivi avec acharnement les mêmes patriotes dont Dumouriez demandait la tête !—contre vous, donc les vengeances criminelles ont provoqué les mêmes cris d'indignation dont vous voulez faire un crime à ceux qui sont vos victimes ! Eh bien ! ma conclusion c'est le décret d'accusation contre tous les complices de Dumouriez et

contre tout ceux qui ont été désignés par les pétitionnaires !”—The Gironde party were undone ; Brissot and twenty others of their leaders were immediately put on their trial, condemned, and executed.

No one at all acquainted with the rhetorical art can deny to these passages merit of the highest order. Above all, no one acquainted with the conduct of debate can doubt that they are precisely the kind of passages most surely calculated to awaken, to gratify, to control an assembly deliberating on the actual affairs of men. The speaker who thus delivered himself was plainly gifted with extraordinary eloquence ; and however he may have dwindled down to a frigid, sententious, unimpressive rhetorician upon occasions of an *epideictic* kind, occasions of mere display like the fête in honour of the Supreme Being, or even when in the Convention, his personal vanity and desire of oratorical renown made him overdo his part, it is certain that he was capable of excelling in the art ; that he did excel on those great occasions which are fitted to call forth its highest displays ; and, sure test of excellence, that he rose with the difficulties opposed to him, meeting with superior power the more pressing exigencies of the occasion.

That Robespierre may be tried by this test, we naturally turn to his great speech on the 8th Thermidor, the eve of his downfall ; that speech of which we shall presently see that Cambacérès pronounced a very high panegyric to Napoleon, himself rather disposed to admire the revolutionary Dictator. It is a production of the highest merit, and manifestly elaborated with extraordinary care as well as skill in oratory. The passage respecting the fête in honour of the Supreme Being is, for a popular Assembly, perhaps too splendid, and might be deemed exaggerated ; but the taste of the speech generally is correct and severe. That he had in various passages the masterpieces of the ancient orators in his mind, can admit of no doubt : but there is nothing to be seen like servile imitation ; and even in the instance which most reminds us of the original, (“Non ! nous n’avons pas été trop sévères ! J’en atteste la république qui respire ! J’en atteste la représentation nationale environnée du respect dû à la représentation d’un grand peuple !”—and ending with “On parle de notre rigueur, et la patrie nous reproche notre faiblesse”), we find nothing nauseous in the imitation, but so fruitful a series of illustrations from the actual state of things, that all notion of pedantic recourse to Demosthenes is put to flight. There is also throughout the speech a tone of deep feeling, which was not natural to the speaker, and probably was awakened by the peculiarity of his unprecedented position, and the extreme singularity of the crisis in which he spoke.

Nor will the inference be in the least altered if it shall be supposed that these great passages were not quite so extemporaneous as they at first seem to be. It may very possibly be suggested that,

in anticipation of some such occasion, he might have been ready with a summary, a powerfully-condensed and exquisitely-elaborated summary, of the charges against the party of the Lameths in the one case and of the Gironde in the other. The same may be said of many of the most brilliant and most successful feats of modern eloquence, as it may of all, or nearly all the more exquisite oratory of the ancients. But the power of skilfully and suddenly adapting to the posture of the moment, and introducing and using naturally on the sudden, the fruit of previous study, is one of the most difficult parts of the orator's arts; one which is the latest learnt and the most rarely employed with signal success. An examination of other parts of Robespierre's speeches has led me to the same conclusion to which a consideration of these passages plainly conducts us; and I conceive that his great eminence as a speaker and an occasional writer stands entirely indisputable.

It is known that he owed whatever success we allow him as a speaker, to the indefatigable industry of his nature, which overcame the natural impediments of a harsh discordant voice, mean and hateful aspect, slow and hesitating enunciation. His first efforts were complete failures; failures sufficient to dishearten any one not embarked in the quest of distinction with his whole heart, and concentrating all his force in that single pursuit. It was only by slow degrees that he became capable of drawing any attention—became tolerable to his audience. It was also by great labour that he continued to maintain his position as a speaker; and even when his facility had been exceedingly increased by diligent practice and by his eminent position, it was at all times by an effort that he accomplished his purpose.

Whether Robespierre originally had formed the design of rising to supreme power, or only began to conceive it after events which he could not foresee might seem to place it within his reach, has sometimes been made a question, and, as it appears to me, very erroneously. No person ever began his public life with such a plan by which to shape his conduct, and Robespierre most certainly only at first thought of making himself a name and a place among men of political eminence, nor dreamt of rising above all others until the events of August and September, 1792, gave him a prospect of such distinction. With the defects by which his progress was obstructed, his personal defects and want of physical as well as moral courage, any hopes of overtopping all his more gifted competitors must at first have been wholly out of the question.

But it is a much more difficult matter to determine how far he originally felt any of the Republican enthusiasm, how far he really entertained any of the levelling principles, which inspired and guided the authors of the first Revolution. His nature was singularly alien from any warmth of temper likely to engender enthu-

siasm; yet he may, from his misanthropic feelings and hatred of all above him, have really acquired something like a zealous antipathy to the established institutions of the country, and something approaching to a fanatical desire for their subversion. It is very possible that at first such feelings may have influenced his conduct; and it is certain that the gratification of his prevailing propensities—first, the thirst of distinction, then the love of power—was quite compatible with indulging in these hostile feelings; nay, that the two indulgences were such as mutually to aid and to pander for each other. The political and religious enthusiasm which some lenient critics of his life have ascribed to him, had assuredly no other existence. It would be very greatly to exalt his character were we to give him credit for anything like fanaticism in the more ordinary acceptance of the term.

That he went fully into the system of proscription, at least for a certain period, cannot be doubted; but there seems every reason to disbelieve the remark wittily made after Danton's death, "*Que Robespierre avait mis la Convention en coupe réglée*"—(that he treated the Convention like a forest which was to be cut down successively by fixed portions.) On the contrary, it appears unquestionable that he had become really alarmed at the rapid progress of legal execution, and was desirous of stopping, but was embarrassed with the extreme difficulty and even danger of doing so, and thus was placed between two great perils, or two fears, when he found himself, like Macbeth,—

"So far in blood steep in
That turning were as tedious as go o'er."

His absenting himself for six weeks not only from the Convention, but from the Committee of Public Safety, only attending the Jacobin Club, and preparing that extraordinary speech which he delivered on the day before his downfall, is a fact which cannot fail to operate in his favour; and although he most probably was kept informed, by Couthon and St. Just, of all that passed, he certainly has, in consequence of his absence, considerably less responsibility than his colleagues for the dreadful carnage which attended the close of the Decemviral reign. Napoleon told Mr. O'Meara, whose authority is wholly unimpeachable,¹ that he had himself seen letters of Robespierre to his brother, representative of the people with the army of Nice, which proved his determination to bring the Reign of Terror to an end. That he was cut off in the midst of some such plan, which he wanted nerve to execute, is highly probable. That he was condemned without a hearing, and clamoured down by an intrigue of his colleagues Billaud and Collot, whose destruction he had planned, appears to be quite certain. When Cambacérès, an

¹ I happen to know facts unknown to Mr. O'Meara when he was writing Napoleon's allusions to those same facts, *e. g.* Secret Negotiations with Spain in 1806; and thus those allusions were to him unintelligible.

acute observer, and a perfectly candid witness, was asked his opinion of the 9th Thermidor by Napoleon, whose estimate of Robespierre was not unfavourable, he said, "C'était un procès jugé, mais non plaidé." And he added that the speech of the day before, which began the struggle, was "filled with the greatest beauties" (*tout rempli des plus grandes beautés*). To his habitual and constitutional want of courage it seems clear that the tyrant's fall must be ascribed. His heart failed not in the Convention when he vainly strove to be heard, and ended by exclaiming, "Encore une fois! Veux-tu m'entendre, Président d'assassins?" But his time was now past for resisting the plot of his adversaries, and saving himself by destroying them. He had not in time taken his line, which was to sacrifice Billaud and Collot, and perhaps Tallien; and then at once to close the Reign of Terror and abolish the Revolutionary Tribunal. This course required a determination of purpose and a boldness of execution which were foreign to his mean nature, happily for the instruction of mankind; because had he, like Sylla, survived the bloody tyranny in which he had ruled, and, much more, had he laid down the rod, like the champion of the Roman aristocracy, the world, ever prone to judge by the event, and to esteem more highly them that fail not, would have held a divided opinion, if not pronounced a lenient judgment, upon one of the most execrable and most despicable characters recorded in the annals of our race.

In fine, that he was, beyond most men that ever lived, hateful, selfish, unprincipled, cruel, unscrupulous, is undeniable. That he was not the worst of the Jacobin group may also be without hesitation affirmed. Collot d'Herbois was probably worse; Billaud Varennes certainly, of whom it was said by Garat, "Il fauche dans les têtes, comme un autre dans les prés" — (he mows down heads as another would grass.) But neither of these men had the same fixity of purpose, and both were inferior to him in speech. Both, however, and indeed all the revolutionary chiefs, were his superiors in the one great quality of courage; and while his want of boldness, his abject poverty of spirit, made him as despicable as he was odious, we are left in amazement at his achieving the place which he filled, without the requisite most essential to success in times of trouble, and to regard as his distinguishing but pitiful characteristic the circumstance which leaves the deepest impression upon those who contemplate his story, and in which he is to be separated from the common herd of usurpers, that his cowardly nature did not prevent him from gaining the prize which, in all other instances, has been yielded to a daring spirit.

Such was Robespierre—a name at which all men still shudder. Reader, think not that this spectacle has been exhibited by Providence for no purpose, and without any use! It may serve as a warning against giving way to our scorn of creatures that seem

harmless because of the disproportion between their mischievous propensities and their powers to injure, and against suffering them to breathe and to crawl till they begin to ascend into regions where they may be more noxious than in their congenial dunghill or native dust! No one who has cast away all regard to principle, and is callous to all human feelings, can be safely regarded as innocuous, merely because, in addition to other defects, he has also the despicable weakness of being pusillanimous and vile.

DANTON.

A man of Robespierre's character, and with his great defects as a revolutionary chief, may be able to raise himself in troublous times to great eminence, and possibly even to usurp supreme power, but he never can take the lead in bringing great changes about; he never can be a maker of the revolutions by which he may however profit. His rise to distinction and command may be gained by perseverance, by self-denial, by extreme circumspection, by having no scruples to interfere with his schemes, no conscience to embarrass, no feelings to scare him, above all, by taking advantage of circumstances, and turning each occurrence that happens to his account. These qualities and this policy may even enable him to retain the power which they have enabled him to grasp; but another nature and other endowments are required, and must be added to these, in order to form a man fitted for raising the tempest, and directing its fury against the established order of things. Above all, boldness, the daring soul, the callous nerves, the mind inaccessible to fear, and impervious to the mere calculations of personal prudence, almost a blindness sealing his eyes against the perception of consequences as well to himself as to others, is the requisite of his nature who would overturn an ancient system of polity, and substitute a novel regimen in its place. For this Robespierre was wholly unfit; and if any man can more than another be termed the author of the French Revolution, it is Danton, who possessed these requisites in perfection.

There can hardly a greater contrast be found between two individuals than that which this remarkable person presented in all respects to Robespierre. His nature was dauntless; his temper mild and frank; his disposition sociable; naturally rather kind and merciful, his feelings were only blunted to scenes of cruelty by his enthusiasm, which was easily kindled in favour of any great object; and even when he had plunged into bloodshed, none of the

chiefs who directed those sad proceedings ever saved so many victims from the tempest of destruction which their machinations had let loose. Nor was there anything paltry and mean in his conduct on these occasions, either as to the slaughters which he encouraged or the lives which he saved. No one has ever charged him with sacrificing any to personal animosity, like Robespierre and Collet d'Herbois, whose adversaries fell before the Revolutionary Tribunal, or those against whom offended vanity made them bear a spite; and it is certain that he used his influence in procuring the escape of many who had proved his personal enemies. His retreat to Arcis-sur-Aube, after his refusal to enter the Committee of Public Safety, and finally his self-sacrifice by protesting against the sanguinary course of that terrible power, leave no doubt whatever resting upon his general superiority in character and in feelings to almost all the other chiefs.

His natural endowments were great for any part in public life, whether at the bar or in the senate, or even in war : for the part of a revolutionary leader they were of the highest order. A courage which nothing could quell; a quickness of perception at once and clearly to perceive his own opportunity, and his adversary's error; singular fertility of resources, with the power of sudden change in his course, and adaptation to varied circumstances; a natural eloquence springing from the true source of all eloquence—warm feelings, fruitful imagination, powerful reason, the qualities that distinguish it from the mere rhetorician's art,—but an eloquence hardy, caustic, masculine; a mighty frame of body;¹ a voice overpowering all resistance : these were the grand qualities which Danton brought to the prodigious struggle in which he was engaged; and ambition and enthusiasm could, for the moment, deaden within him those kindlier feelings which would have impeded or encumbered his progress to eminence and to power. That he was extremely zealous for the great change which he so essentially promoted, can admit of no doubt; and there is no reason whatever for asserting that his ambition, or any personal motive, overtopped his honest though exaggerated enthusiasm. The zeal of St. Just and Camille Desmoulins was, in all probability, as sincere as Danton's; but they, especially St. Just, suffered personal feelings to interfere with it, and control their conduct to a very much greater extent; and their memory, especially St. Just's, is exposed to far more reproach for their conduct in the bloody scenes to which the Revolution gave birth.

The speeches of Danton were marked by a fire, an animation,

¹ It was his own expression, "*La Nature m'a donné en partage les forces athlétiques et la physionomie âpre de la Liberté.*" (Nature has given me for my portion the athletic strength and harsh expression of Freedom.) He was marked with the small-pox, like Robespierre, but had a masculine countenance, broad nostrils, forward lips, and a bold air, wholly unlike his.

very different from anything that we find in those of Robespierre, and the other leaders of the Revolution, except perhaps Isnard, the most ardent of them all. In Danton's eloquence there appears no preparation, no study, nothing got up for mere effect. We have the whole heart of the man poured forth; and accordingly he rises upon any incidental interruption, and is never confounded by any tumult or any attack. In one particular, as might be expected from his nature, he stands single among the great speakers of either France or England—the shortness of his speeches. They are, indeed, harangues prompted by the occasion; and we never lose the man of action in the orator. If we were to look for a specimen of his manner, perhaps none could be found better or more characteristic than his reply to the attack made upon him by La-source, whom the Gironde put forward to charge him with his known partiality for Dumouriez. Danton was then the recognised leader of the Mountain; and the fierce struggle between that party and the Gironde having begun, the latter deemed it a great advantage to connect their adversaries, through him, with Dumouriez, whose treason was now avowed. The success of Danton's defence was complete, and paved the way for the subsequent denunciation of the Gironde. The speech is full of extempore bursts which have great merit, and produced an extraordinary impression. It may suffice to give the passage in which he denounced the Gironde. It follows his sudden retort on the cry that he was playing with Dumouriez the part of Cromwell. The success of that retort appears to have suggested and sustained the denunciation:—

“Si donc ce n'est que le sentiment profond de vos devoirs qui a dicté son arrêt de mort (Louis XVI); si vous avez cru sauver le peuple et faire en cela ce que la nation avait droit d'attendre de ses mandataires; ralliez-vous, vous qui avez prononcé l'arrêt du tyran, contre les lâches (*turning to the right—the Gironde*) qui ont voulu le sauver; serrez-vous, appelez le peuple à se réunir en armes contre les ennemis du dehors, et écraser ceux du dedans; confondez par la vigueur et l'immobilité de votre caractère tous les scélérats, tous les aristocrates, tous les modérés, tous ceux qui vous ont calomniés dans les départemens. Plus de composition avec eux! (*Extraordinary applause, in which the galleries joined.*) Reconnaissez-le tous, vous qui n'avez jamais su tirer de votre situation politique dans la nation le parti que vous auriez pu en tirer, qu'enfin justice vous soit rendue. Vous voyez par la situation où je me trouve en ce moment la nécessité où vous êtes d'être fermes, et de déclarer la guerre à tous vos ennemis, quels qu'ils soient. (*Renewed applause.*) Il faut former une phalange indomptable. Ce n'est pas vous, puisque vous aimez les sociétés populaires et le peuple; ce n'est pas vous qui voudrez un roi. (*More shouts; loud cries of 'Non! non!' from the great majority of the Convention.*) C'est à vous à en ôter l'idée à ceux qui ont machiné pour conser-

ver l'ancien tyran. Je marche à la république—marchons-y de concert : nous verrons qui de nous ou de nos détracteurs atteindra le but.”¹

The great power of this declamation is incontestable. His concluding sentence savoured of the exaggeration and defective taste which marked many of his harangues:—

“Je me suis retranché dans la citadelle de la raison ; j'en sortirai avec le canon de la vérité ; et je pulvériserai les scélérats qui ont voulu m'accuser.”¹

Such violent metaphors of a vulgar class, Danton could venture upon, from his thundering voice and overpowering action. In another they would have excited the ridicule from which those physical attributes rescued them in him.

A charge of corruption has often been brought against Danton, but upon very inadequate grounds. The assertion of Royalist partizans that he had stipulated for money, and the statement of one that he knew of its payment, and had seen the receipt (as if a receipt could have passed), can signify really nothing, when put in contrast with the known facts of his living, throughout his short public career, in narrow circumstances, and of his family being left so destitute that his sons are at this day leading the lives of peasants, or, at most, of humble yeomen, and cultivating for their support a small paternal farm in his native parish. The difference between his habits and those of the other great leaders gave rise to the rumours against his purity. He was almost the only one whose life was not strictly ascetic. Without being a debauched man, he indulged in sensual

¹ “If, then, it be the profound sense of duty which dictated the condemnation of the King—if you conceived that you thereby saved the people, and thus performed the service which the country had a right to expect from its representatives—rally, you who pronounced the tyrant's doom ; rally round me against the cowards who would have spared him ; close your ranks ; call the people to assemble in arms against the enemy without, and to crush the enemy within ; confound, by the vigour and steadfastness of your character, all the wretches, all the aristocrats, all the moderates, all those who have slandered you in the provinces. No more compromise with them ! (*Immense applause, in which the galleries joined.*) Proclaim this, you who have never made your political position available to you as it ought to be, and let justice at length be done you ! You perceive, by the situation in which I at this moment stand, how necessary it is that you should be firm, and declare war on all your enemies, be they who they may. (*Renewed applause.*) You must form an indomitable phalanx. It is not you who love the clubs and the people that desire a king. (*Loud cries of 'No ! no !'*) It is your part to root out such an idea from such as have contrived to save the former tyrant. For me, I march onwards to a republic ; let us all join in the advance ; we shall soon see which gains his object—we or our slanderers !”

² “I have entrenched myself in the citadel of reason ; I shall sally forth with the artillery of truth ; and I shall crumble to dust the villains who have presumed to accuse me.”

It must be remarked that such passages as the former, in all languages, are hardly possible to translate ; for they are more or less conversational in their diction, and exceedingly idiomatic. The fustian of the last extract is more easy to render.

pleasures far more than comported with the rigid republican character; and this formed one of the charges which, often repeated at a time when a fanatical republicanism had engendered a puritan morality, enabled Robespierre, himself above all suspicion of the kind, to work his downfall.¹

The patriarchs of the Revolution who still survive, such as M. Lakanal, always hold Danton to be identified with the Revolution, and its principal leader. In fact, the 10th of August, which overthrew the monarchy, was his peculiar work. He prepared the movement, headed the body of his section (the Cordeliers) in their march first through the Assembly, demanding, with threats of instant violence, the King's deposition, then attacking the palace to enforce their requisition. When, soon after that memorable day, the Prussians were advancing upon Paris, and in the general consternation the Assembly was resolved to retreat behind the Loire, he alone retained his imperturbable presence of mind, and prevented a movement which must have proved fatal, because it would have delivered over Paris to the Royalists and the allied armies. The darkest page in his history, however, swiftly follows his greatest glory. He was Minister of Justice during the dreadful massacres of September, and he was very far from exerting his power to protect the wretched victims of mob fury. On that occasion was pronounced his famous speech already cited on the necessity of bold measures—a speech by which he was long known, and will be long remembered, throughout all Europe. Other traits of his vehement nature are still recorded. When interrogated at his trial, his answer was, “*Je m'appelle Danton; mon séjour sera bientôt le néant; mon nom vivra dans le panthéon de l'histoire.*” When taking leave of his young and fair wife, and for a moment melted to the use of some such expressions as, “*Oh, ma bien aimée! faut-il que je te quitte?*”—suddenly recovering himself, he exclaimed, “*Danton, point de faiblesse! Allons en avant!*”—And the same bold front was maintained to the end. His murder was the knell of Robespierre's fate; and while choked with rage on his own accusation, and unable to make himself heard, a voice exclaimed, “*C'est le sang de Danton qui t'étouffe!*” (It is the blood of Danton that chokes you!) But it must be admitted to have been a fine, a just, and an impressive lesson which, goaded by the taunt, the tyrant, collecting his exhausted strength for a last effort, delivered to his real accomplices, the pusillanimous creatures who had not dared to raise a hand, or even a voice, against Danton's murder—“*Lâches! que ne le défendiez-vous donc?*” (Cowards! then why did you not defend him?) On the scaffold, where he retained his courage and proud self-possession to the last, the executioner cruelly and foolishly prevented him from embracing, for the last time, his friend Hérault de Sechelles, a man of unsullied cha-

¹ In a former volume I had expressed myself respecting Danton with a harshness which a more minute study of his conduct and character makes me regret.

racter, great acquirements, and high eminence at the bar, as well as of noble blood :¹ "Fool!" exclaimed Danton indignantly, and with the bitter smile of scorn that marked his features, "Fool! not to see that our heads must in a few seconds meet in that basket."

The fall of Danton and of his faithful adherent Camille has ever been regarded as one of the most surprising events in the Revolution. His habitual boldness, and the promptitude with which he always took and pursued his course, seems for the moment to have forsaken him; else surely he could have anticipated the attack of the Committee, which was fully known beforehand. The Triumvirate had become generally the objects of hatred and of dread. The Gironde, though broken and dispersed, and hostile to Danton, as well as to the other partisans of the Mountain, were the last men to approve the course which had been followed since the destruction of their leaders, and were anything but reconciled to mob government, which they had always detested and scorned, by the desperate excesses to which it had led. On the scattered fragments of that once powerful party, then, he might well have relied. Even if he was ignorant of the impatience which Tallien, Bourdon de l'Oise, Legendre, and others, felt under the Triumviral domination, and which the two former had not yet perhaps disclosed, he never could have omitted the consideration that some of them, especially Legendre, had before, and prematurely, given vent to their hostile feelings towards Robespierre, and were therefore sure to display them still more decidedly now that he was so much less powerful, and had so much more richly earned their aversion. As for the charges against Danton, they were absolutely intangible: the speech of Robespierre, and report of St. Just, presented nothing like substantial grounds of accusation, even admitting all they alleged to be proved. Their declamation was vague and puerile, asserting no offence, but confined to general vituperation, as that he abandoned the public in times of crisis, partook of Brissot's calm and libercide opinions, quenched the fury of true patriots, magnified his own worth and that of his adherents; or flimsy and broad allegations of things wholly incapable of proof, as that all Europe was convinced of Danton and Lacroix having stipulated for royalty, and that he had always been friendly towards Dumouriez, Miraubeau, and d'Orleans. The proposition of Legendre, to hear him before decreeing his prosecution, was rejected by acclamation; and the report of St. Just against him, though, by a refinement of injustice, as well as an excess of false rhetoric, addressed to him in one continued apostrophe of general abuse an hour long, was delivered and adopted in his absence, while he was buried in the dungeons of the state prison. The Revolutionary Tribunal, for erecting which he asked pardon of God and man, having nothing like a spe-

¹ He was nephew of Madame de Pollignac, favourite and confidante of the Queen, through whose influence he had been appointed to a high legal situation.

cific charge before them, much less any evidence to convict, were daunted by his eloquence and his courage, which were beginning to make an impression upon the public mind, when the Committee sent St. Just down to the Convention with a second report, alleging a new conspiracy, called the *Conspiration des Prisons*—an alleged design of Danton and his party, then in custody, to rush out of the dungeons, and massacre the Committee, the Jacobin Club, and the patriots in the Convention; liberate young Capet, that is, Louis XVII., and place him in Danton's hands. Upon this most clumsy fabrication, every word of which refuted itself, it was at once decreed that the tribunal should proceed summarily, and prevent any of the accused being heard who should resist or insult the national justice—that is, who should persist in asserting his innocence.¹ Sentence and execution immediately followed.

These circumstances make it apparent that Danton's supineness in providing for his own safety by attacking the Committee first, must have proceeded from the ascendant which the Triumvirate had gained over his mind. Originally he had a mean opinion of Robespierre, holding him void of the qualities which a revolutionary crisis demands. "Cet homme-là [was his phrase] ne saurait pas cuire des œufs durs"—(that man is incapable of boiling eggs hard). But this opinion was afterwards so completely changed, that he was used to say, "Tout va bien tant qu'on dira Robespierre et Danton; mais malheur à moi si on dit jamais Danton et Robespierre"—(all will go well as long as men say "Robespierre and Danton;" but woe be to me if ever they should say "Danton and Robespierre"). Possibly he became sensible to the power of Robespierre's character, for ever persisting in extreme courses, and plunging onwards beyond any one, with a perfect absence of all scruples in his remorseless career. But his dread of such a conflict as these words contemplate was assuredly much augmented by the feeling that the match must prove most unequal between his own honesty and openness, and the practised duplicity of the most dark, the most crafty of human beings.

The impression thus become habitual on his mind, and which made him so distrustful of himself in a combat with an adversary like the rattlesnake, at once terrible and despicable, whose rattle gives warning of the neighbouring peril, may go far to account for his avoiding the strife till all precaution was too late to save him. But we must also take into our account the other habitual feeling, so often destructive of revolutionary nerves; the awe in which the children of convulsion, like the practisers of the dark art, stand of the spirit they have themselves conjured up; their instinctive feeling of the agonistic throes which they have excited and armed with such resistless energy. The Committee, though both opposed and

¹ This proceeding of stopping the accused's mouth when on his trial, was termed putting a person *hors des débats*.

divided against itself, still presented to the country the front of the existing supreme power in the state; it was the sovereign *de facto*, and retained as such all those preternatural attributes that "do hedge in" monarchs even when tottering to their fall: it therefore impressed the children of popular change with the awe which they instinctively feel towards the Sovereign People. Hence Danton, viewing in Robespierre the personification of the multitude, could not at once make up his mind to fly in the face of this dread power; and his hesitation enabled his adversaries to begin the mortal fray, and win their last victory. Plainly, it was a strife in which the party that began was sure to carry the day.

The history of Danton, as well as that of Robespierre, both those passages wherein they were successful, and those in which one fell beneath the power and the arts, the combined force and fraud, of the other, is well calculated to impress upon our minds that, in the great affairs of the world, especially in the revolutions which change its condition, the one thing needful is a sustained determination of character; a mind firm, persevering, inflexible, incapable of bending to the will of another, and ever controlling circumstances, not yielding to them. A quick perception of opportunities, a prompt use of them, is of infinite advantage; an indomitable boldness in danger is all but necessary: nevertheless Robespierre's career shows that it is not quite indispensable; while Danton's is a proof that a revolutionary chief may possess it, and may be destroyed by a momentary loss of nerve, or a disposition to take the law from others, or an inopportune hesitation in recurring to extreme measures. But the history of all these celebrated men shows that steady, unflinching, unscrupulous perseverance—the fixed and vehement will—is altogether essential to success. "*Quod vult, id valde vult*," said one great man formerly, of another, to whom it applied less strikingly than to himself, though he was fated to experience in his own person that it was far from being inapplicable to him of whom he said it. It was the saying of Julius Cæsar respecting Junius Brutus, and conveyed in a letter to one who, celebrated, and learned, and virtuous as he was, and capable of exerting both boldness and firmness upon occasion, was yet, of all the great men that have made their names illustrious, the one who could the least claim the same habitual character for himself. Marcus Tullius could never have risen to eminence in the Revolution of France, any more than he could have mingled in the scenes which disgracefully distinguished ¹ it from those of Rome.

¹ The only respect, perhaps, in which this can justly be asserted is the profanation of judicial forms and the deliberate course of misrule pursued in France by the leaders, and submitted to by the people. The massacres of Marius and Sylla were far more sanguinary, but they were the sudden effects of power—mere acts of military execution. The scene in France lasted much above a year.

CAMILLE DESMOULINS. — ST. JUST.

The great leaders whom we have been contemplating had each a trusty and devoted follower, Danton in Camille, and Robespierre in St. Just; and these in some sort resembled their chiefs, except only that St. Just was more enthusiastic than Robespierre, and was endowed with perfect courage, both physical and moral.

Camille had long before the Revolution ardently embraced republican opinions, and only waited with impatience for an opportunity of carrying them into effective operation. He was a person of good education, and a writer of great ability. His works are, excepting the pamphlets of Sieyes, the only ones, perhaps, of that countless progeny with which the revolutionary press swarmed, that have retained any celebrity. The very names of the others have perished, while the periodical work of Camille, the *Vieux Cordelier*, is still read and admired. This exemption from the common lot of his contemporary writers, he owes not merely to the remarkable crisis in which his letters appeared, the beginning of general disgust and alarm at the sanguinary reign of the Triumvirate; these pieces are exceedingly well written, with great vigour of thought, much happy classical allusion, and in a style far more pure than the ordinary herd of those employed who pandered for the multitude.

But the merit of Camille rises very much above any literary fame which writers can earn, or the public voice can bestow. He appears ever to have been a friend to milder measures than suited the taste of the times, and to have entirely agreed with Danton in his virtuous resistance to the reign of blood. At the very beginning of the Revolution he had contributed mainly to the great event which launched it, the attack upon the Bastille. He harangued the people, and then led them on, holding two loaded pistols in his hands. He also joined Danton in the struggle which the Mountain made against the Gironde, and is answerable for a large share in the proscription of that party, firmly believing, as Danton did, that their views were not purely revolutionary, and that their course must lead to a restoration of the monarchy. He was at first, too, a promoter of mob proceedings and the mobs that regulated them, his nickname being the "Procureur Général de la Lanterne" (*Attorney-General of the Lamp-post*). But there ended his share in the bloody tragedy which followed; and he regarded with insurmountable jealousy the whole proceedings of the Triumvirate. Nevertheless, Robespierre, who had resolved upon his destruction because of his intimate con-

nexion with Danton, so far entered into his views of relaxing the speed of the proscriptions as to approve of the earlier numbers of the *Vieux Cordelier*, which he revised and corrected before their publication. There is even good reason for believing that Camille might have escaped the proscription which involved Danton and his party, through the disposition of Robespierre not having been very unfavourable to him, because it seems certain that his doctrine in favour of returning to more moderate courses was not so much dreaded by that terrible chief as by others, especially St. Just. But a sarcastic expression in which he indulged at the expense of that remorseless and vain fanatic, sealed his doom. St. Just was always puffed up with his sense of self-importance, and showed this so plainly in his demeanour, that Camille said he "carried his head like the holy sacrament"—"and I," said St. Just, on the sneer being reported to him, which has the merit of giving a very picturesque description of the subject, "and I will make him carry his head like St. Denis," alluding to the legend of that saint having walked from Paris to his grave carrying his head under his arm.

Camille met death with perfect boldness, though his indignation at the gross perfidy and crying injustice to which he was sacrificed enraged him so as to make his demeanour less calm than his great courage would have prescribed, or than his friend Hérault de Sechelles desired. "Montrons, mon ami," said he, "que nous savons mourir" (let us show, my friend, that we know how to die).

It is a remarkable circumstance in the history of Camille, that he was wholly precluded by an incurable hesitation from speaking in public, and consequently could take no part in debate. Nothing can show more conclusively than the station to which he rose in the annals of the Revolution, that oratory, mere speaking, bore a far more inconsiderable part in the conduct of affairs than it usually does in the administration of popular governments. The debates of the Convention were for the most part short, full of quick and sudden allusions, loaded with personalities and abounding in appeals to the popular feelings, but with few long or elaborate speeches. The principal pains appear to have been bestowed upon the reports of the Committees, which were eagerly listened to, and produced a great effect, by the importance of their subjects and the authority of the bodies from whom they proceeded. In general, the debates resembled more the practical discussions of men engaged in action than the declamations or the arguments of debaters. Thus oratory was of less avail than might have been expected in the action of so popular a government. It should seem that such a government must be settled before eloquence can have its full scope. "*Pacis comes, otique socia, et jam bene constitutæ reipublicæ alumna eloquentia.*" (*Cic.*) Other qualities raise a man above his compeers while the popular tempest rages. A fixed purpose, a steady pursuit

of one object, an assurance given to the people that he may be relied upon at all times and to every extent, a constant security against all wavering, a certainty that no circumstances in his conduct will ever leave anything to explain or account for, nay, a persuasion that nothing unexpected by those whose confidence his past life has gained will ever be done, so as to excite surprise and make men exclaim, "Who could have thought it? This from him! Then what next?"—these are the qualities which far outweigh all genius for debate in the troublous times that try men's souls, fill all minds with anxiety, and open the door to general suspicion.

Without any gifts of wealth or of station, without even the common faculty of expressing himself in public, with no professional or other station to sustain him, a man necessarily unknown, at first altogether and afterwards only known by his firm will, his devotion to republican principles, and his steady adhesion to one party and one chief, Camille became one of the leading men in the Convention and the State, and had gained this high position before he was known as a writer of singular powers; for his celebrated letters were only produced towards the very close of his life. It was, no doubt, an additional cause of his elevation, and probably first recommended him to the public favour which he had so little means of improving, that he began early to support the revolutionary movement, and had, before the great events of 1789, declared himself a friend of republican principles. So it was with Couthon, a provincial advocate in Auvergne, and as unfitted for action by a paralytic stroke, which deprived him of the use of his limbs, as Camille was by the stutter which deprived him of the use of his tongue. Yet Couthon formed the third of the famous Triumvirate which exercised for above a year—an age in revolutionary times—the dictatorship of France. He is represented as a person of an engaging aspect and noble presence, notwithstanding the grievous infirmity with which he was stricken. When any measures of peculiar severity were to be propounded, he was always chosen by the Committee to bring them forward, and he was remarkable for uttering the most atrocious and pitiless sentiments in a tone and with a manner the most affectionate and tender. Like most of his colleagues, he practised on great occasions some of those strokes for stage effect that so powerfully affect the minds of the multitude and of the French more than perhaps any other, being confounded with the sublime, and bordering generally upon the ludicrous. When the destruction of Lyons had been decreed, he had himself carried to the great Place, and gave the signal for the work of demolition with a hammer, and the command or sentence in these words, "*Je te condamne à être démolie au nom de la loi*" (I condemn thee to destruction in the name of the law).

The nature of the debates in the Convention has been already adverted to. They were constantly interrupted by the utmost violence of individuals and parties, so as to set at naught all attempts of

the President to keep any semblance of order. The scene was often one of perfect confusion, in which his bell tolled in vain, and his hat was in vain put on, and he occasionally left the chair in despair of maintaining even the outward appearance of order and regularity. The two cardinal points upon which hinge the whole regularity and independence of the proceedings in our popular assembly were wholly wanting in the French Convention—the chair was not supported and deferred to by common consent as representing the majority of the whole body, and the strangers admitted to the galleries (*tribunes*) were not there upon mere sufferance, ready to be instantly excluded if they in the least particular presumed to interfere with the proceedings.

The licence and the personalities in which the members were wont to indulge with levity and coarse humour formed a strange and even appalling contrast to the dreadful work in which they were engaged.—Legendre was a butcher, and that he had imported the habits of his trade into his political conduct appears plainly enough from his proposition to have the King's body cut into eighty-three portions, and distributed among the several departments. His calling was not unfrequently brought up against him in the Convention—"Tais-toi, massacreur de bœufs!" said one whom he was denouncing. "C'est que j'en ai assommé qui avoient plus d'esprit que toi!" was the butcher's immediate reply.—Another being on his defence against a motion for a decree of accusation, to put him on his trial, Legendre then presiding said, "Décrète qu'il soit mis"—"Décrète," said the other, interrupting him, "décrète que je suis un bœuf, et tu m'assommeras toi-même."—Such passages remind one of the grotesque humours of the fiends in 'Paradise Lost,' whose scoffing raillery in their "gamesome mood" Milton has so admirably painted, to the extreme displeasure, no doubt, of his prudish critic, in whose estimation this is by "far the most exceptionable passage of the whole poem."¹

The talent which Camille displayed as a writer has been alluded to; it may not be of the highest order were we considering the merit of one who was a mere author. But he also played a great part among the actors in the scenes of the time; and of those he stands certainly highest as a master of composition. There is nothing vile or low in his taste, like that most base style of extravagant figure and indecent and even obscene allusion which disgusts us in the abominable writings of the Héberts and the Marats; nor are our feelings shocked by anything of the same ferocity which reigned through their constant appeals to the brutal passions of the savage mob. On the contrary, the allusions are chiefly classical, the sen-

¹ Addison, 'Spectator,' No. 279. The dialogue of mutual sarcasm between Adamo and Sinon in Dante's 'Inferno,' would have given the same offence to the critic; and the poet seems as if conscious of the offence he was offering to squeamish persons when he makes Virgil chide his pupil for listening to such ribaldry.

timents generally humane, the diction refined. Seven papers only of his most celebrated work, '*Le Vieux Cordelier*,' appeared before his moderate councils sealed his fate. But from one of these a passage may be selected for a fair sample of his powers as a writer. It is his appeal to the Convention, awakening their courage, and urging them to condemn the danger of stemming the ultra-revolutionary torrent; and it must be allowed that the topic of illustration is happily chosen, as it is certainly ably handled :—

“ Eh quoi ! lorsque tous les jours les douze cent mille soldats du peuple français affrontent les redoutes hérissées des batteries les plus meurtrières, et volent de victoires en victoires, nous, députés à la Convention, nous, qui ne pouvons jamais tomber, comme le soldat, dans l'obscurité de la nuit, fusillé dans les ténèbres, et sans témoins de sa valeur ; nous, dont la mort soufferte pour la liberté ne peut être que glorieuse, solennelle, et en présence de la nation entière, de l'Europe, et de la postérité, serons-nous plus lâches que nos soldats ? Craignons-nous de nous exposer, de regarder Bouchotte¹ en face ? N'oserons-nous braver la grande colère du Père Duchesne,² pour remporter aussi la victoire que le peuple français attend de nous, la victoire sur les ultra-révolutionnaires comme sur les contre-révolutionnaires ; la victoire sur tous les intrigans, tous les fripons, tous les ambitieux, tous les ennemis du bien public ? ”³

St. Just was in every point of view a person very inferior to either Danton or Camille. Except his unhesitating audacity, derived from a strong enthusiasm, which nothing could quell, and which stopped at nothing, and a considerable facility of speech, but with no power of argument or gift of eloquence, he really appears to have possessed no quality to entitle him to the high place after which he aspired, and which he almost immediately gained at a very early age, for he was only twenty-one years old when the Revolution broke out, and barely twenty-five when a member of the Committee of Public Safety. He was a young man of a fine aspect and even engaging countenance ; and his sincere republican fanaticism was unquestionable. But this

¹ A Terrorist general of the Hébert faction.

² The name of Hébert's journal.

³ “ What ! While the twelve hundred thousand soldiers of the French people each day face the redoubts bristling with the most destructive batteries, and fly from victory to victory, shall we, we the representatives of that people in the Convention, we, who cannot fall, like soldiers, in the obscurity of night, killed in the dark, and with no witness of our valour—we, whose death for liberty cannot but be glorious, solemn, in the presence of the whole nation, of Europe, and of posterity—shall we be more timid than our troops ? Shall we be afraid of exposing ourselves, of facing Bouchotte ? Shall we not dare to brave the fury of Père Duchesne, in order to win the victory which the people of France is expecting at our hands ; a victory over ultra-revolutionists as well as counter revolutionists, a victory over all the intriguers, all the knaves, all the ambitious, all the enemies of the country ? ”

affords so little palliation of his conduct, that it rather makes him appear as so much the more dangerous, and it undoubtedly made him the more mischievous. His youth and spirit, always when combined a favourite with the multitude, gave him a sway which made Robespierre at once perceive the importance of attaching him to himself. Accordingly he kept steadily by his patron to the end, and shared the fate which his violent councils, far outstripping those of his leader, would possibly have postponed if not prevented.

It must be added that with his fanaticism was mixed up the most selfish vanity and irritable impatience of whatever wounded it. The cold-blooded murder of Camille for a jest uttered at his expense, is one of the most disgusting atrocities in the whole Reign of Terror, and could only have been perpetrated by a man whose whole feelings were absorbed in self-esteem, and to whom carnage was familiar or indifferent, if not absolutely grateful. He had shown the same proneness to shed blood when employed as the Committee's emissary and representative with the armies. He is said to have caused fifty officers to be shot in one day, when he was with the army of the north; and when the siege of Charleroi went on less rapidly than his impatience and ignorant presumption desired, he put a colonel of artillery to death without remorse.

He valued himself, among other accomplishments, on his talent for composition; but his writings, like his speeches, were a mere patchwork of phrases from Rousseau, Diderot, and other writers of the modern school, strung together with sounding generalities about equality, the people, and the rights of man. To give samples of the rant, half cold declamation, half mawkish sentimentality, which composed his speeches would be unprofitable. Like all such authors, he mistook exclamation and apostrophe for pathos. This passage on the King's trial is far from being an unfair specimen of his manner; and nothing can be much worse. After alluding to Louis XVI.'s known kindness of disposition and his charities, he breaks out into this rhapsody:—

“ Louis outrageait la vertu ; à qui paraîtra-t-elle désormais innocente ? Ainsi donc, âmes sensibles, si vous aimez le peuple, si vous vous attendrissez sur son sort, on vous évitera avec horreur ; la fausseté d'un roi qui travestissait le sentiment ne permettrait plus de vous croire ; on rougira de paraître sensible.”¹

Hardly any of the revolutionary chiefs showed less shining talents than St. Just; none proved themselves more unscrupulous in the pursuit of victory; none more careless of the crimes they instigated or perpetrated. His maxim that “ no one can rule in France innocent-

¹ “ Louis outraged virtue : to whom will she hereafter appear innocent ? Thus, ye feeling hearts, if you love the people, if you are melted at seeing their lot, you will be shunned with horror ; the falsehood of a king who masked himself in sentiment will not suffer you to gain credit for your professions. Men will henceforth blush to appear tender-hearted.”

ly," (on ne règne pas innocemment en France) if followed up to its practical consequences, was the direct sanction of every enormity that ambition could commit in chace of dominion.

It should seem as if, in casting their several parts, the Decemvirs well understood each other's propensities, if not their several capacities. While the war-department was committed to Carnot, who by common consent was the most singularly fitted to conduct it, others might be less qualified for their departments than Carnot was for his, but all were apparently chosen with a view at least to their several tastes, if not to their capacities. The care of the police and of whatever measures were required for maintaining or exciting the popular feelings, was given to Robespierre; the proposal of violent proceedings to the mild-spoken and, from his infirmities, inoffensive Couthon; while the reports to the Convention fell upon Barrère, whose want of determined or distinct principles and character, as well as his easy eloquence, seemed peculiarly to fit him for this task; and to the suspicious, implacable St. Just belonged the watching and denunciation of political offenders, including of course the extensive system of spy-craft (*espionnage*) kept in perpetual activity. It should seem, however, as if Robespierre himself employed spies apart from his colleagues. Curious reports of these agents were found among his papers, and have been made public. The circumstances seized upon by the watchful eyes of those vile wretches are all of the most trivial nature, and demonstrate the readiness with which everything and anything becomes matter of charge under such a regimen. Of one deputy (Bourdon de l'Oise) it is said, after tracing his whole motions during the day, that on going to the Convention he yawned repeatedly while reports were read of matters advantageous to the state. (*Papiers inédits*, vol. i. p. 370.) Of another (Thuriot) it is said, that some one upon quitting him said, "ne tarde pas," (make haste). (*Ib.* p. 371.) Of Legendre it is said, after a minute account of all the insignificant things he did during the morning, that he "conversed mysteriously with some one, and that both appeared to avoid the crowd." (*Ib.* p. 367.)

It is not to be forgotten, in considering the relative demerits of the Triumvirate, that by far the most sanguinary period of the Reign of Terror was the last month of its duration, as we have already seen; and during the whole of that period Robespierre absented himself from the Committee as well as the Convention. It is true that he was engaged in supporting possibly the system, certainly his own party in it, at the Jacobin club, and with the municipality of Paris; and he most probably was aware of all that passed among his colleagues in his absence. But the details at least of these wholesale murders, the *fournées* (or batches), as they were quaintly termed, were left to the unflinching hands of the pitiless Couthon and the ferocious St. Just. Nor is it to be kept out of view that this detestable youth urged upon the tyrant a measure from which

even his savage nature recoiled (if indeed it be not that his nerves gave way at the prospect), a measure of sweeping extermination, which would have left all former atrocities excluded from their due share of execration with after times, and must have stayed, possibly might have averted, the fate of the Dictators.

The reflection which after all most constantly arises in the mind from the contemplation of such dreadful scenes, is the one to which reference has in part already been made towards the commencement of these details — an astonishment almost amounting to incredulity that the French nation could have stood by, and seen and suffered them to be enacted. Everything was done which human wickedness could accomplish to outrage the strongest feelings of our nature, and those feelings of every description; for while the most atrocious, the most shameless injustice, proverbially said to drive wise men mad, was displayed with an audacity that would hardly be becoming in those whose judgment was infallible and nature impeccable, and while the highest dignities, the most exalted institutions were laid prostrate at the feet of the vulgar tyrants of a day, such deeds of blood were perpetrated as always take the strongest hold upon the feelings of the bulk of mankind; and all this was not merely submitted to in patience; a considerable portion of the people in many places were active approvers, and many were agents, and were stained with these dreadful crimes. If any one had, before 1789, aye, or even before 1792, foretold that the French people would submit to a law preventing men upon trial for their lives from being heard in their own defence, and commanding that the judges should condemn to death for political offences without evidence, he would have been laughed to scorn as a false prophet, and reprobated as a public slanderer. But if any one had pretended to foresee the time when the statue of a miscreant universally scorned and detested for daily recommending the wholesale murder of his fellow-creatures, without a vestige of those talents which too often conceal the nakedness of guilt, or those graces which lend a passing hue of fairness to the external surface of moral poison, would, with general applause, even of those who had loathed him living, be enshrined in the national temple of glory, among men whose genius and virtue had long been the pride of the French people — assuredly such a seer would have been deemed insane. Can anything more strikingly or more frightfully impress upon the mind a sense of the mischiefs which may spring from popular enthusiasm, when bad men obtain sway over a nation little informed, and unable or unwilling to think and judge for itself; ready to believe whatever is told by interested informants, to follow whatever is recommended by false advisers acting for their own selfish ends? That no such scenes could now be renewed in France we may very safely venture

to affirm, though much mischief might still be wrought by undue popular excitement. That in this country such things are wholly impossible needs no proof; the very least of the terrible departures from justice which marked the course of the French mob-tyranny, would at once overthrow whatever person might here attempt to reign by such means, and would probably drive us into some diametrically-opposite extremes to those which had given birth to any outrage of the kind. But this security arises wholly from the people's habit of thinking for themselves, and the impossibility of any one making them act upon grounds which they do not comprehend, or for purposes in which they have no manifest interest, or to suit views carefully concealed from them, and only covered over with vague phrases, which in this country are always the source of incurable distrust.

It is impossible to say the same thing of all parts of our people; it would be most false to assert, for example, that the Irish people are safe from such influence. On the contrary, they manifestly do not think and judge for themselves; they certainly are in the hands of persons who need not take the trouble to give sound reasons, or any reasons at all, for their advice. The Irish people are excited and moved to action in the mass by appeals to matters of which they do not take the pains to comprehend even the outline, much less to reflect on the import and tendency. They are made, and easily made, to exert themselves for things of which they have formed no distinct idea, and in which they have no real interest whatever. They leave to others, their spiritual and their political guides, the task of forming their opinions for them, if mere cry and clamour, mere running about and shouting, can be called opinions. They never are suspicious of a person's motives, merely because they see he has an interest in deceiving them. They never weigh the probabilities of the tale, nor the credit of him that tells it. They may be deceived by the same person nine times in succession, and they believe him just as implicitly the tenth; nay, were he to confess that he had wilfully deceived them to suit a purpose of his own, they would only consider this a proof of his honesty, and lend an ear if possible more readily to his next imposture. A people thus uninstructed, thus excited, thus guided, are most deeply to be pitied; and the duty is most imperative of their rulers, by all means and without delay, to rescue them from such ignorance, and save them from such guides by every kindly mode of treatment which a paternal Government can devise. But such a people, especially if the natural goodness of their dispositions were not outraged by scenes of a cruel kind, would easily be moved to witness, and to suffer the grossest violations of justice, would let themselves be hallooed on to the attack of their best friends by any wily impostor that might have gained their confidence, and would suffer men as base and as execrable as Marat to usurp the honours of their Pantheon.

But it must be admitted that there existed two powerful causes of the success which attended the vile agitators of France,—causes sufficient to account for much of the impression which they were allowed to make, and of the impunity which they enjoyed after their worst misdeeds.

In the *first* place there was a very large portion of genuine and even virtuous patriotism among many of the men who bore a part in public affairs, who remained attached to their principles during the struggle of parties, and who were but little corrupted by the personal views which had early seduced so many of their chiefs. They had a strong feeling in favour of liberty, and of consequent attachment to the Revolution in the first and guiltless stage of its existence; they had also an ardent love of their country, of her glory, above all, of her independence. The court-party early betrayed views, natural in their position, hostile to the new order of things; and as the revolutionary measures more departed from moderation, and the existence of the monarchy became more exposed to peril, that party cast their eyes unhappily towards foreign assistance, the idea which at once aroused the feelings of Frenchmen, and marshalled on the side of even an extreme policy, a large portion of the community not originally prepared to part with all the existing institutions of that ancient kingdom. Nothing but the invasion of the allies in 1792 could have reconciled such men to the violence which was then done, not only to the court and royal family, but also to multitudes of harmless individuals in obscure station. The brilliant progress of the war during the Reign of Terror blinded many persons to the atrocities daily committed; and their perpetrators had the skill to make it supposed that a sudden reverse of the singular fortune which attended their arms, if not an invasion of France by the allies, was the alternative to be expected from the overthrow of their dominion and a restoration of moderate and regular government. In the midst of all the factious conflicts which tore the infant republic, the general prevalence of purely patriotic feelings, and motives solely influenced by honest views of the public good, how often soever mistaken, remains quite unquestionable. The great bulk of the Convention, and many even of the leaders, were men devoted to their country, and bent only on the discharge of their public duty. "*La patrie*," the magic word which never lost its influence, was in all men's mouths, but also in most men's hearts. Many chiefs who became corrupted by ambition in the course of their exertions for her interests, or perverted by hostility towards each other, in the progress of their mutual conflicts, began their career with as unfeigned a love of their country, and as honest an attachment to revolutionary principles, and the cause of just reform, as ever filled the hearts or guided the course of any statesmen in any age. Some of the great leaders, as Robert Lindet, Vergniaud, perhaps Danton

and Camille, retained the same principles throughout their short and stormy lives. Some, as Carnot, Lakanal, Barthélemy, probably Roederer, after holding fast by their integrity during the awful struggle that was so fitted to try men's souls, survived the tempest, and adorned by their talents and edified by their virtues the more tranquil season that succeeded. The criminal portion of the revolutionists were few in number compared to those whom they duped, or whom they succeeded in overawing by the violence of the multitude. But it was not wholly against their will, or through the mere influence of terror, that the bulk of the Convention and of the country submitted to the outrages of the Decemvirs. An alarm of an opposite nature worked strongly on their minds; the dread of a counter-revolution, and of the vengeance which its leaders, if successful, would surely exercise, had a very powerful operation in reconciling men's minds to the existing Government; and it is certain that the execution of the King and the other crimes early committed by some and connived at by all, had the greatest influence in causing a general fear of retribution and a proportional alarm at what must happen should the old dynasty be restored.

These considerations must be taken into our account in examining the conduct of the French, and accounting for their submission to the tyranny, injustice, and cruelty of their revolutionary chiefs, else we shall both mistake the state of the question and do injustice to that great people. It is also due to the leading men of those times that we record how pure was the attachment of many of them to their country, and how little other motives operated on their minds. The course so frequent in such times, leading others from patriotism to faction, from zeal for a principle to impatience of opposition, and from desire of victory over an adversary to the lust of power for personal gratification, gave rise to most of the errors and many of the crimes which we have been contemplating. A melancholy consideration of these and their causes only serves to enhance the value of those men who yielded to no such seductions, and to increase our respect for their pure motives and virtuous lives. But the same contemplation suggests another reflection, teaches another lesson. It shows, with the force of demonstration, the fatal consequences to themselves and their own virtue, of men, however strong their principles and pure their enthusiasm, yielding to such a passion, and overleaping under its influence the plain line of duty which forbids the doing of evil that good may come. It shows the fatal consequences to the community of suffering parties and their chiefs to acquire the ascendant, when pretending, perhaps at first really meaning, to rule the state for the furtherance of a wholesome, rational policy—it being hard to say whether more wickedness may be committed by public men under the influence of enthusiasm, or more detriment sustained by the country under the misguidance of faction.

In the *second* place it must be observed that in all times of revolutionary violence there is an impunity secured to the worst characters by the spirit of party, and especially by the slowness of party chiefs to sacrifice even their worst adherents, and give them over to the merited indignation of the world. See the universal horror and disgust which Marat inspired in all men and of all parties—his odious violence, his virulence of temper more hateful still, his savage ferocity of manner exacerbated by the fury of his sentiments, and the wildness of his propositions; his avowed authorship of a journal which openly preached the indiscriminate massacre of whole classes for their political principles; his constant efforts to excite the mob and drive them towards the most infernal excesses¹—all these execrable and utterly abominable things had so entirely obliterated the merits which his revolutionary violence and devotion to the extreme party might seem to display, that no one would associate with him or remain on the bench of the assembly on which he took his seat; and when he rose to vindicate himself from the charges on which he was put upon his trial, and began by saying that he was aware he had many enemies in the Convention, his voice was drowned by cries from every quarter of "*All! All!*"—Yet the Jacobin party allowed this wretch to be elected one of the deputies from the capital;² and neither Robespierre nor any of his adherents, nor even Danton, ventured to denounce him, and to give

¹ In recommending the massacre of all aristocrats, he scrupled not to proclaim through his paper, the "*Ami du peuple*," that 270,000 heads must fall by the guillotine; and he published lists of persons whom he consigned to popular vengeance and destruction by their names, description, and places of residence. He was remarkable for the hideous features of a countenance at once horrible and ridiculous, and for the figure of a dwarf, not above five feet high. He was on his first appearance in the mob-meetings of his district the constant butt of the company, and maltreated by all, even to gross personal rudeness. The mob, however, always took his part, because of the violence of his horrid language. Thus long before he preached wholesale massacre in his journal, he had denounced 800 deputies as fit for execution, and demanded that they should be hanged on as many trees. His constant topic was assassination, not only in his journal but in private society. Barbaroux describes him in his '*Mémoires*' (p. 59) as recommending that all aristocrats should be obliged to wear a badge, in order that they might be recognised and killed. "But," he used to add, "you have only to wait at the playhouse door and mark those who come out, and to observe who have servants, carriages, and silk clothes; and if you kill them all you are pretty sure you have killed so many aristocrats. Or if ten in a hundred should be patriots, it don't signify—you have killed ninety aristocrats." He was about fifty at the time of his death, being born in 1744, and consequently of an age prior to that of the other leaders except Bailly, who was born in 1736. He is said to have taught French in Edinburgh about the year 1774; and he there published a pamphlet in English, under the title of "*The Chains of Slavery*." He was born at Neufchâtel, and was an obscure medical practitioner in Paris. He published some works of some learning and little other merit on subjects of physical science.

² There were among the twenty-four deputies of Paris in the Convention ten of the greatest leaders, exclusive of Marat,—Robespierre and his brother, Danton, Collot d'Herbols, Camille Desmoulins, Legendre, Fabre d'Eglantine, Billaud Varennes, David, and Egalité (of ~~de~~ *de* ~~de~~ Duc d'Orléans). Robespierre's brother was

their real and known sentiments respecting him—nay, when the accident of his assassination had freed the earth from so monstrous a pollution, and his bust was simply for that reason placed in the Pantheon, most of the great leaders paid tributes of respect from time to time to his memory, holding up his supposed services as objects of public gratitude, and his death as a martyrdom for revolutionary principles. Yet that death had not obliterated the recollection of one of the enormities of his life, which had made him so justly the object of universal scorn. Robespierre pronounced his funeral oration; David boasted of preserving by his pencil “the cherished features of the virtuous friend of the people;” and Danton most unaccountably and preposterously called him the Divine Marat, boasting after his assassination of having long before given him that very absurd appellation.

Can any one doubt that such conduct in parties and their chiefs, such a pusillanimous truckling to the passions of the rabble, such a base pandering to their worst propensities as this silence respecting great criminals implies, must ever be as impolitic as it is profligate and unprincipled? We have examples of its consequences in all ages, and it has proved most injurious to many a great man’s renown. It was probably only as a party leader that Julius Cæsar, without partaking in Catiline’s conspiracy, spoke far too gently of it, and gave its accomplices his protection, if not his countenance, on the proceeding against them before the senate. But the result of this party delicacy has been the impression which still rests on the memory of that great man, and leads to a prevailing suspicion of his having secretly joined the most abandoned of conspirators. So, in modern times, whoever is afraid of denouncing known guilt merely for fear of losing the support of some partisan, or offending some party, must make up his mind to passing for the accomplice in crimes which, whether from timidity or upon calculation, he dares not denounce. Against the loss of support let men wisely set the loss of character, which such an unprincipled course is sure to entail upon those who pursue it; and it is not doubtful on which side the balance of the account will be found to rest.

a person of no weight, and only known from his relationship. He was, however, a zealous Republican, was employed with the army of Italy when it took Nice; and he sacrificed himself generously on the downfall of his brother, with whom he was arrested at his own desire, and executed with the triumvirate.

SIEYES.

There are few names in the French Revolution which have figured so much as that of the Abbé Sieyes ; and hardly any which is better known in connexion with this great chapter of modern story. Those who have only marked the space which he filled in debate, or the merits of his celebrated tracts at the convocation of the States General, or the failure of all his plans of constitutions, are apt to underrate the importance of his labours, and to suppose that his high place in the revolutionary Pantheon had been inconsiderately awarded by the public voice. A personal acquaintance with him would certainly have led to the same conclusion. But near observers, belonging to the times in which he figured, entirely dissent from this opinion, and give reasons, apparently satisfactory, for taking the more ordinary view of his services and his importance. I have frequently discussed the subject both with General Carnot and Prince Talleyrand, neither of them at all likely to be deceived by a mere theorist, both of them entertaining very little respect for a metaphysical politician, and from all their own tastes and habits sure to regard with somewhat of disdain a purely speculative statesman. Yet both agreed in affirming the great merit of the Abbé, and they appealed to the extreme importance of the measures which proceeded from him, and for the suggestion of which they both gave him the exclusive credit.

Those great measures were three in number, of which certainly it would not be easy to overrate the importance,—namely, the joint verification of the powers at the meeting of the States General, the formation of the National Guards, the establishment of the new system of provincial division and administration. The first of these measures led directly to the great step of the three orders, Prelates, Peers, and Commons, sitting in one chamber, and the consequent absorption of the whole in the latter body. The value of the second needs not be dwelt upon. But the third was by far the most material of the whole, because it not only settled the Revolution upon an immoveable foundation—the admission of the people everywhere to a share in the local administration of their concerns—but destroyed the remains of the monarchical divisions of the territory, and rendered inevitable that grand step, the most precious of all the fruits of the Revolution, the abolition of the various local and customary codes, and the extension over the whole country of one universal system of jurisprudence ; instead of a state of things so intoler-

able, and so absurd, as the existence of totally different laws in different streets of the same town or hamlet.

If it is granted that the whole praise of these reforms belongs undivided to Sieyes, it is proved that his was a mind most fertile of resources, and that its conceptions were not more vast than they were practical. M. Thiers describes his genius as characterised by this peculiarity—"a systematic concatenation of his own ideas"—a peculiarity which he shared with our Bentham; and the likeness is only made the more striking when the author adds, that "to this was united an inflexible obstinacy of disposition, which made him as tenacious of his own opinions as he was intolerant of all others." (*Hist. de la Révol. Française*, tom. i.) M. Mignet describes him as still more of a speculatist; but his sketch loses not at all the resemblance to what we have seen of Bentham. "Sieyes," says he, "would have founded a sect in the days of monkish solitude; and study had early ripened his faculties, and filled his mind with new, strong, and extensive ideas, but somewhat systematic. Society had been the main subject of his investigations. He had followed its progress, and decomposed its springs, and he conceived the nature of government to be rather a question of age and period than of rights; he disdained the ideas of others, because he found them incomplete: and, in his eyes, half a truth was equivalent to error. Opposition irritated him; he was not communicative; he desired to be understood entirely, and this he found impossible with half the world. His disciples transmitted his systems to others, and this gave them a mysterious air, and made him the object of a kind of worship. He possessed the authority which attends a perfect political science, and the constitution might have sprung from his head, like Minerva from Jupiter's, or the codes of ancient law-givers, if it had not been that in our days every one claimed a right of aiding him, or of modifying his work. Nevertheless, his forms were, with some modifications, for the most part adopted; and in the Committees, where his labours lay, he had more disciples, than fellow-workmen." (*Hist. de la Révol. Française*, tom. i. p. 113.)

As of other remarkable persons, so of Sieyes, are there many things recounted which appear to rest on no foundation. Of this description is the story so often told, that on the question coming to him upon the punishment which should be inflicted on the unfortunate Louis XVI., he, impatient of the speeches which had preceded him, pronounced these words, "*La mort, sans phrase.*" No such thing is recorded in the account published by authority in the '*Moniteur.*' Under the head of Deputies from the Department of La Sarthe, we have this entry:—

"Froyer—La Mort.

"Sieyes—La Mort.

"Le Tourneur¹—La Mort."

¹ Le Tourneur de la Manche was afterwards one of the Executive Directory.

It is a form of voting adopted by many of the members, and nothing whatever distinguishes these from the other votes.

To the earlier period of the Revolution, the importance and the fame of Sieyes must be confined. Nothing can well exceed the absurdity of some plans which he, at a later stage, propounded. He had a great share in the proceedings of Brumaire, which overthrew the Directory and founded the Consulship under Napoleon. But he desired not to establish a Consulate, of which he should himself hold his share, a divided and nominal third of the supreme power, while in reality all authority was to be vested in one of his colleagues. He proposed a form of government, which, for its absurdity, may fairly challenge the preeminence with any not the produce of Dean Swift's satirical humour. Napoleon should, according to this strange scheme, have been invested with the supreme magistracy, but without any power, executive or legislative; enriched with an enormous salary, and suffered to exercise the whole patronage, civil and military, of the State, while others were named by the people to make the laws, and conduct, in union with his executive nominees, the government of the country. Napoleon's remark was, that he had no wish to "be a fattened hog, on a salary of some millions (*cochon à l'engrais à un salaire de quelques millions*), after the life which he had led and the position to which it had carried him." I must add that I have met with several French politicians, neither ignorant nor speculative, who had, much to my surprise, formed rather a favourable opinion of this plan.

In the beginning of the year 1817, I made acquaintance with the Abbé, at that time, with Cambacérès and other regicides, residing at Brussels. I was then on my way to attend my parliamentary duties at the opening of the Session; and finding himself in company with a party leader, he was,—unfortunately for me, who desired to hear him descant on matters which he understood,—led to give me at great length and with little fruit, his ideas upon a point the most incomprehensible to a foreigner, and indeed the most difficult for any uninitiated Englishman, any Englishman out of the vortex of practical politics, to understand, namely, the course most fitting, in the circumstances of the moment, for the English Parliamentary opposition to take. I admired the unhesitating confidence with which he delivered authoritatively his opinions, oracularly dictating to me his crude, absurd, most ignorant notions. I marvelled at the boldness of the man who could thus lecture one necessarily well acquainted with the subject, of which the lecturer could not by possibility understand the A, B, C. I exceedingly lamented the loss of what might have been an interview filled with curious information. I returned to England without the least disposition to put a single one of his absurdities to the test of experience; for indeed to have mentioned even the most

tolerable of them to the least experienced of my party would have been to raise a doubt of my seriousness, if not of my sanity. Both my valued friend Lord Kinnaird and myself were mightily struck with the contrast which Cambacérès presented to the Abbé in these interviews.

After the Revolution of 1830 Sieyes returned to Paris, where he lived to an extreme old age; and for several years before his death paid no attention to anything except the care of his health, seldom seeing his friends, and only quitting his house to take an airing in a carriage. A general desire was expressed by his colleagues of the Institute, that he should return to his place in that illustrious body. Count Roederer was one of a deputation which sought an interview with him in the hopes of prevailing upon him to change his resolution and yield to the general wish. The attempt was vain; and a touching scene was described to me by the Count. After saying how useless a member he should now be of any association, and conversing, but in a strain that bore marks of the hand of age being upon him, he said, "Enfin, je ne sais plus parler, ni"—and after a pause he added, "ni—me taire."

FOUCHÉ

AFTERWARDS DUKE OF OTRANTO.

[For this Note I am indebted to my noble and learned Friend the Earl Stanhope.]

I formed his acquaintance at Dresden, where he arrived about November, 1815, as French Minister, but in a sort of honourable exile; and he told me that the Duke of Wellington had advised him not to accept that mission, saying, "You will get into a hole which you will never be able to leave." He afterwards expressed to me his regret at not having followed that advice, and his opinion that the anticipation was realized by the event.

From an exaggerated opinion, both of his own importance and of the malice of his enemies, he had left Paris in disguise, and was so apprehensive of being recognized, that when he met his wife on the road he would not acknowledge her. He had remained some weeks at Brussels, and carried on a correspondence with the Duke of Wellington and others, but after receiving from the French government a peremptory order to repair to his post, he continued his journey under the name of M. Durand, marchand de vin, till he came to Leipzig, where he resumed his own name. He was accompanied by his wife, who was of the family of Castellane, and related, as he said, to the Bourbons, with four children by his former marriage, by an eldest son who appeared to be of weak intellect, and who became remarkable for his avarice, by two other sons

who, even in their childhood, exhibited a strong disposition to cruelty, by a daughter, and by a very intriguing governess, Mlle. Ribaud.

He had been early in life a professor in the Oratoire, and it was said very truly at Dresden that he had "le visage d'un moine, et la voix d'un mort," and, as he was for some time the only foreign minister at that court, that he appeared "like the ghost of the departed corps diplomatique." His countenance showed great intelligence, and did not indicate the cunning by which he was eminently distinguished; his manner was calm and dignified, and he had, either from nature or from long habit, much power of self-possession. When I announced to him the execution of Marshal Ney, of which by some accident I had received the earliest information, his countenance never changed. He appeared to be nearly sixty years of age, and his hair had become as white as snow, in consequence of his having, according to his own expression, "slept upon the guillotine for twenty-five years." His conversation was very animated and interesting, but it related, chiefly to events in which he had been an actor, and his inordinate vanity induced him to say: "I am not a king, but I am more illustrious than any of them." His statements did not deserve implicit credence, and I may mention as an instance his bold denial that during the whole course of his long administration as Minister of Police, any letter had ever been opened at the post-office.

Amongst a great number of anecdotes which he related to me, there were two that exhibited in a very striking manner the fertility of his resources when he acted on his own theatre, though, as I shall afterwards show, he appeared utterly helpless amidst the difficulties which he encountered at Dresden.

While he was on a mission to the newly-established Cisalpine Republic, he received orders from the French Directory to require the removal of some functionaries who were obnoxious to the Austrian government. He refused to comply, and stated in his answer that those functionaries were attached to France; that the ill-will with which they were viewed by the Austrian government was not a reason for the French government to demand their dismissal; that, according to intelligence which had reached him, Austrian troops were advancing, and that the war would be renewed. The orders were reiterated without effect, and one morning he was informed that an agent of the Directory was arrived at his house, and was accompanied by some gendarmes. Fouché desired that the agent might be admitted, and that a message might be sent to his friend General Joubert, who commanded some French troops then stationed in the same town, requesting him to come immediately, and to bring with him a troop of cavalry. The agent delivered to Fouché letters of recall, and showed to him afterwards an order to arrest him and to conduct him to Paris. Fouché made some observations to justify himself till the arrival of Joubert with the cavalry was announced, when he altered his tone, and told the agent: "You talk of arresting me, and it is in my power to arrest you." Joubert said, on entering the room, "Me voilà avec mes dragons, mon cher ami; que puis-je faire à votre service?" and Fouché replied: "Ce drôle-là veut m'arrêter." "Comment!" exclaimed Joubert, "dans ce cas-là je le taillerais en mille pièces." The agent excused himself as being obliged to execute the orders which he had received, and was dismissed by Fouché with the remark, "Vous êtes un sot; allez tranquillement à votre hôtel."

When he had retired, Fouché observed that the Directory was not respected either at home or abroad, that it would therefore be easy to overthrow the Government, and that Joubert might obtain high office if he would assist in the undertaking. Joubert answered that he was merely a soldier, and that he did not wish to meddle in politics; but he granted Fouché's request of furnishing him with a military escort to provide for his safety till he reached Paris. On the road he prepared an address to the Council of Five Hundred, which was calculated to be very injurious, and perhaps fatal, to the government. When he arrived at Paris he called on each of the Directors, but was not admitted, and he expressed to me his conviction that he should have been arrested the next morning if he had not immediately insisted upon having an audience with Talleyrand, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. Fouché, after defending his conduct, said that he considered it his duty, before he presented his address, to show it to Talleyrand, who no sooner read it than he saw its dangerous tendency, and the whole extent of the mischief to which it might lead. He told Fouché: "I perceive that there has been a misunderstanding, but everything may be arranged;" and added, "the post of Minister to the Batavian Republic is now vacant, and perhaps you would be willing to accept it." Fouché who perceived that the other was intimidated, determined to avail himself of the advantage which he had acquired, and replied that his honour and character had been attacked, that immediate reparation was necessary, and that his credentials must be prepared in the course of the night, in order that he might the next day depart on his mission. This request having been granted, Fouché proceeded to state that his journey to Paris had been very expensive; that he had, through his abrupt departure from the Cisalpine Republic, lost several valuable presents which he would have received; and that his new mission required another outlay, for all of which he demanded an order for the immediate payment of two hundred thousand francs by the national treasury. Talleyrand gave the order without hesitation; and Fouché, who had arrived in disgrace, if not in great danger, departed the next morning as a minister plenipotentiary with a considerable sum of money.

After Napoleon, on his return from Elba, had made such progress as alarmed the French government, Monsieur, afterwards Charles X., sent a message to Fouché requesting a meeting with him in the Tuileries. Fouché declined it, saying that as the circumstance would be known, it would place his conduct in a very ambiguous light, and he then received another message proposing to meet him at the house of a third party. To this proposal Fouché assented, on the condition that the interview should take place in the presence of witnesses, two of whom should attend on each side. On such an occasion any questions of etiquette must have appeared of very subordinate importance, the condition was accepted, and in the interview, which lasted several hours and till long after midnight, Fouché was offered the appointment of Police, the title of Prince, and the decoration of the St. Esprit. Fouché replied that the advance of Napoleon was the natural and necessary consequence of the general discontent which prevailed; that no human power could prevent his arrival at Paris; that Fouché's acceptance of office under such circumstances might create an impression of his having betrayed a sovereign whom he ought faithfully to serve; and that he was therefore obliged to reject the offers which in the course of the conversation were re-

peatedly pressed on his acceptance. It seemed to be supposed by the French Government that the refusal of such offers was an indication of attachment to Napoleon, and the next morning, when Fouché was in his carriage, at a short distance from his own house, he was stopped "in the name of the King," by an officer of police, attended by gendarmes. Fouché desired them to accompany him to his house, when, on getting out of the carriage, he demanded the production of the warrant by which he was arrested; and on its being shown to him, he threw it on the ground, exclaiming, "It is a forgery; that is not the King's signature." The officer of police, astounded by the effrontery with which Fouché spoke, allowed him to enter the house, when he made his escape through the garden, and went to the *Princesse de Vaudremont*, who concealed him till the return of Napoleon. *Mdlle. Ribaud*, the governess, sent a message to the National Guards requesting their immediate attendance, and conducted through the house the officer of police, as he told her that he had orders to take possession of Fouché's papers. His bureaux, etc. were searched, but nothing of any importance was found in them, and *Mdlle. Ribaud* when passing through her own room drew a trunk from beneath her bed, and, taking a key out of her pocket, offered to show her clothes to the officer of police, who said that he had no wish to give her that trouble. It was, however, in that trunk that Fouché's important papers were deposited. In the meantime the National Guards had arrived, and after they were harangued by *Mdlle. Ribaud* on the merits and services of Fouché, and on the insult and injustice with which he had been treated, they drove away the gendarmes who attended the officer of police.

Fouché, who after the return of Napoleon was re-appointed Minister of Police, was asked by him whether it was not very desirable to obtain the services of Talleyrand, who was then one of the French ambassadors at Vienna. Certainly, replied Fouché; and Napoleon then said, "What do you think of sending to him a handsome snuff-box?" Fouché was aware of the extreme absurdity of endeavouring to bribe a minister, who was supposed to be rapacious, by a present which, as a matter of course, he had received on the conclusion of every treaty, observed, if a snuff-box were sent to Talleyrand, he should open it to see what it contained. "What do you mean?" inquired Napoleon. "It is idle," replied Fouché, "to talk of sending to him a snuff-box. Let an order for two millions of francs be sent to him, and let one-half of the sum be payable on his return to France." "No," said Napoleon, "that is too expensive, and I shall not think of it."

When Napoleon determined to hold the Assembly of the *Champ de Mai*, he convened his Council of State, and read to them the speech which he intended to deliver on that occasion. Some of the members expressed their entire and unqualified approbation, and others suggested a few verbal alterations; but Fouché, when it came to his turn, said that he disapproved of it both in its form and in its substance, and he then strung together some of the commonplace phrases with which his ordinary conversation so much abounded, that "truth must be heard," that "illusions could no longer prevail," etc. One of the Councillors having remarked that a written document would be very desirable for the discussion, Fouché produced the speech which he had prepared. It stated that the Allied Powers had declared war not against France

but against Napoleon; that if they were sincere in their professions, they would guarantee to France her independence, and the free choice of her own government, and that he would in that case abdicate the throne; but that if such a guarantee were refused, it would be a proof that they were insincere, and that he would then ask permission to place himself at the head of the French armies in order to defend the honour of the country. Napoleon made no observation; but, calling the Councillors to him in succession, and whispering a few words to each of them, they rejected the proposal. He must have perceived that the Allies, who viewed with anxiety and mistrust the mighty conflict in which they were about to engage, would have granted the guarantee which was required; that he should have been obliged to abdicate; and that a Republic would have been established in which Fouché hoped and expected to acquire more power than he had yet possessed. Napoleon had on a former occasion removed Fouché from office, and reproached him with his insatiable ambition, saying, "You might always have been minister, but you aspired to be more, and I will not suffer you to become a Cardinal Richelieu."

The Memoirs which after Fouché's death were published under his name do not appear to be authentic, and the statements contained in them differ in many respects from those which I received from him, but neither the one nor the other may have been founded in truth. He read to me occasionally some detached passages, which he composed without any reference to chronological order, but as the circumstances occurred to his mind, and according to his original plan, which he communicated to me in a letter. He intended to divide his narrative into the following parts :—

"La 1^{re} explique la révolution qui a fait passer la France de l'antique monarchie à la république; la 2^e celle qui a fait passer la France de la république à l'Empire de Bonaparte; la 3^e celle qui a fait passer la France de cet Empire à la royauté des Bourbons; la 4^e partie dira la situation de la France et de l'Europe."

In another letter he states :—

"Je travaille huit heures par jour à mon mémoire. Ceux qui croient que ce sont les hommes qui font les révolutions seront étonnés de voir leur origine. J'ai déjà peint le premier tableau des événements d'où sont sorties nos tempêtes passées. Le pendant de ce tableau sera un assez gros nuage d'où partira la foudre qui menace notre avenir."

His participation in the atrocities of the Revolution inspired horror at Dresden, where he formed very few acquaintances, and received hardly any visits except from Count Salmur, a Piedmontais, who had known him at Paris, and from General Gaudi, who had been sent by the Prussian Government to negotiate with respect to the line of demarcation of the Saxon provinces which were ceded, and who had received instructions from Prince Hardenberg to see Fouché frequently, and to watch his proceedings. Fouché said to me very often, "J'ai une folle envie d'écrire, et il faut que j'aille à la campagne;" and I knew that he was not disturbed by many visitors, but I observed to him that he might give directions not to admit them. He replied, "Ne voyez-vous pas que j'ai une jeune femme, et quand je me pousse en force, je la perds d'une autre manière?" I told him that he might very easily hire one of the country houses which at that time of year were unoccupied; but he said that he

should expect the owner to remain there during his residence, and to treat him with the respect and attention which were due to him. He seemed to think that even a stranger would be too happy to accept the proposal, and to have an opportunity of associating with a person who, according to his own opinion, was "more illustrious" than any king.

The confidential communications which he received from Paris were addressed to him under another name, and directed to the care of a pastrycook in that part of the town which lies on the other bank of the Elbe. He preserved his former habits of "espionnage," and remarked to me that a person who lived on the opposite side of the street sat close to the window, was much occupied in writing, was very regular in his habits, etc. He seemed to be amused in watching this unknown individual, who was afterwards discovered to be a spy sent by the French Government to observe Fouché.

His ignorance of geography, etc., was really ludicrous. When he heard that Napoleon was sent to St. Helena, he inquired on which side of the Cape it lay; and when he was told by an Englishman that he was going to Hamburg to embark for England, he asked, "Are you not afraid at this time of year of making a voyage in the Baltic?" The other replied that he did not embark on the Baltic. "No," said Fouché, after some consideration, "you will go by the sea of Denmark."

He was extremely delighted when he was informed that Lavalette had effected his escape by the good offices of Sir Robert Wilson and two other Englishmen, and after making a pompous eulogium on them, he said that although they had been punished by the French Government, they would everywhere be respected and honoured; that their conduct must excite general admiration, etc.; and after a long course of high-flown compliments, he concluded by an anticlimax, "if they should come here I will even invite them to dinner."

According to a homely expression, "there was no love lost" between Fouché and Talleyrand. The former said, "Talleyrand est nul till after he has drunk a bottle of Madeira:" and the latter asked, "Do you not think that Fouché has very much the air of a country comedian?" Fouché spoke very contemptuously of the late Emperor of Austria, whom he called "un crétin."

I thought it indiscreet to ask any questions of Fouché on the cruelties of which he was represented to have been guilty at Lyons and at Nantes; but I took an opportunity of mentioning to him that a biographical memoir of him had appeared in the German language. It excited, as I expected that it would, his curiosity, and he requested me to translate it *vivâ voce*, which I accordingly did; and when the sanguinary scenes of Lyons were noticed he exclaimed, "I went there to save the inhabitants, all of whom would otherwise have been murdered by Collot d'Herbois. As for Nantes, I never was there." I remarked to him that the Memoir referred to letters which were signed both by him and by his colleague, and which had been published in the 'Moniteur,' but he replied that it would at that time have been dangerous to disavow them.

He had received from the Prince of the Asturias, afterwards Ferdinand VII., during his residence at Valençay, the most servile letters, earnestly entreating that Napoleon would confer upon him the high honour of allowing him to be allied with some relation, however distant, of the Imperial Family. Fouché said that his hand was kissed by the prince

whenever he had occasion to see him ; and added, " I washed it afterwards, for he was very dirty. "

The intelligence which he received from Paris, through private as well as through public channels, and the hostility which was shown towards the regicides, of whom he was one, rendered him very apprehensive that his property would be confiscated, and he spoke to me frequently upon the subject. He observed that the Charter did not allow confiscation, but added, "*ils ne se gênent pas* ;" and he proposed to make a nominal sale of his property to me, in order to place it beyond the grasp of the French Government. I objected to it on the ground that it would not be a *bond fide* transaction ; but a day or two afterwards I received from him a note, expressing a wish to see me immediately. On going to him, he read to me some papers prepared in technical and legal phraseology, which stated that I had purchased his estates, the annual value of which was I think, 7000*l.*, and also his house at Paris, with the furniture that it contained. I told him that I had already expressed my disapprobation of the principle on which the transaction would proceed ; and I observed to him that the fraud would be discovered, for the French Government would upon inquiry learn from the English ambassador at Paris that I was only an eldest son with a very limited income, and that it was utterly impossible for me to make such purchases. He replied that I might be supposed to have given bonds, or other securities, which were satisfactory to him. I represented to him that the French ambassador in London might by a Bill in Chancery compel me to declare upon oath whether I had or had not purchased his property ; and if so, with what funds ? And he answered, "*Ces parjures-là ne blessent point la conscience.*" I then said, " You have already informed me that one half of your property is settled on your children, and the easiest way of placing the whole of it in safety would be to settle the remainder on Madame la Duchesse." He exclaimed, "*Parbleu, vous avez plus d'esprit que moi, et je ferai venir mon secrétaire sur-le-champ.*" An Act in due form was instantly prepared, and, being registered in Dresden, became the subject of general conversation ; but I considered his communications as confidential, and I said nothing as to the suggestion which I had offered, or as to my knowledge of the transaction.

He was also very apprehensive as to his personal safety, and said, " I fear that I may be carried off by some gendarmes, and that no person will ever hear of me again." He then asked whether, in the event of his being arrested, he should not request General Gaudi to intercede for him with the prime minister, Count Einsiedel ? I answered, that they had no doubt much personal regard for each other, but that in their respective positions it could not be supposed that the former could have any influence with the latter. " Then," replied Fouché, " I will write to the King of Saxony, inquiring what course he will pursue if an order should arrive here for my arrest." He did so, though he was at that time French plenipotentiary ; and he received from Count Einsiedel, an answer, informing him that the King would under any circumstances act as became a man of honour.

On one occasion, when he was more than usually disquieted by the information which he had that morning received from Paris, he called on me, and after mentioning that he was in great danger, and that he wished to go into the Prussian dominions, he inquired if I would accom-

pany him thither? I assented; and we went together to General Gaudi, who was not acquainted with the objects and motives of the intended journey, but seemed much astonished when Fouché abruptly said to him, "You once told me that you have an aunt who is settled in Silesia; and I should like to go and live with her." General Gaudi replied that his aunt was old and infirm, and not accustomed to company, and that she would not like to see a stranger. Fouché then conversed with General Gaudi on the choice of a residence, and was with great difficulty dissuaded from going to one of the ceded provinces, the governor of which entertained for him the strongest aversion. After we had left General Gaudi, I asked Fouché when he intended to depart? and he answered, "At twelve o'clock to-night." I told him that it would have a better appearance if he went by daylight; and, I added, "You should prepare a passport for yourself." "No," replied Fouché, "I intend to travel under your passport." "How so?" I inquired. "As your valet-de-chambre," answered Fouché. I then said that I was willing to accompany him in his quality of French minister, but that I would not convey him under a false character, or smuggle him through the country as if he were contraband goods. He was much displeased, and employed by turns flattery and abuse; but I remained inflexible; and, as I would not accompany him in the manner which he proposed, he determined to remain at Dresden.

At length there appeared in France a law, or edict, which allowed the regicides to reside, at their own choice, either in Austria, in Prussia, or in Russia; and the Austrian minister desired Fouché to determine which of them he would prefer. He wished to settle at Berlin, where, as he said, his advice would be very useful; but he found upon inquiry that this would not be permitted, and Breslau was proposed to him for a residence, which he did not approve, and he went into the Austrian dominions—first to Prague, where he lived very obscurely and with great economy—afterwards, and for a short time, to Linz on the Danube—and then to Trieste, where he died. His widow, who had a life-interest in half his property, re-married. His house at Paris was sold to Baron Rothschild; and it was said, but I know not with what truth, that he bequeathed his manuscripts to Louis XVIII.

It is impossible to close the book that records the rapid, even sudden, rise to power of the men whose course we have been contemplating, without reflecting upon the vanity and emptiness of the gratification held out to ambition, or vanity, or love of glory, by revolutionary times. That gratification is generally much vaunted as the more precious fruit of civil disorder, and no feature of revolution offers more attractions to the young, the ardent, the daring, than its tendency to exalt merit, and its opening a short path to distinction and to power, which a spirit that spurns the long and laborious ascent under regular governments fondly takes, untired by the slipperiness of the road, and unscared by the precipices yawning on either side.

All such spirits are impatient of the slow ascent to fame and influence to which all systems of policy confine the ambitious in ordinary times; and hence the delight with which they hail the subversion of ancient institution, and the approach of wide-spreading change.

But to these men the portion of history which we have been examining reads an impressive lesson. No one endowed with even an ordinary share of prudence can be extravagant enough to prefer the twelve months' possession of power which the Decemvirs obtained as the price of all their struggles, their perils, and their crimes, to the fortune which, slowly gained, would have been long and securely possessed under a regular government. No one setting before his eyes the chances of failure and of destruction which he must have to encounter, and the small probability of being numbered with the successful few, would even deem the prize of some months' dominion, followed by an ignominious death, worth contending for at those hazards, to say nothing of the certain cost of being charged {with the heaviest load under which the conscience can labour. The life, certainly the reign, of a demagogue is of necessity a short one; even where religious bigotry and imposture combine with popular ignorance to give it an unnatural extension, it cannot in any civilized state last long. In France, where its despotism was the most uncontrolled, its duration was the shortest; its sufferings and its ignominy the most appalling

It is thus that the fate of the revolutionary leaders, when duly weighed, is well fitted to teach men the wisdom for their own interest, even if virtue and duty were wholly disregarded, of preferring the sure though slow, the lasting though moderate, rewards which a settled order of things holds out to virtuous ambition or honest love of fame. Such a study may reconcile them, even the most impatient of them, to the duty of bridling their passions, and submitting to the conditions on which alone power and glory may be innocently enjoyed.

*'Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
Noctels atque dies niti prastante labore
Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.'*

But these are not the only reflections which arise naturally in the mind upon a near contemplation of the scenes of the Revolution. We learn, when candidly examining the merits and the history of its great leaders, to distrust the general opinion of them which has prevailed, formed under the influence of the feelings naturally excited by the dreadful events of their day, events the horror of which almost inevitably tended to involve all that had any share of their guilt in an indiscriminate charge of sanguinary and profligate ambition. The public voice

might be excused for thus pronouncing one undistinguishing sentence of condemnation upon them at the time, and while the sentiments that had been raised by so bloody a tragedy retained their force. But subsequent authors and reasoners have too frequently fallen into the same error, and treated the subject as superficially as the ephemeral writers and the speakers of the day. The common, almost the invariable, course has been to make no distinction whatever between the different actors in the drama. Danton has been treated with the same severity as Robespierre; Camille and St. Just have received the same award of condemnation. Nay, the wretched Marat, whom it would be a profanation of the name to call a statesman, has not been held up to greater execration and scorn, than those who really, more or less, were entitled to be so called. A more calm examination of their history, for which survey the time may be admitted now to have arrived, begets far more than doubts upon the soundness of the commonly received opinion, and teaches us to distribute in very different and very unequal shares our praise and our censure. Even respecting Robespierre himself, it is probable that the pitch of the public voice has been somewhat too high, and that his bad and despicable character, dark as undeniably it was, had still some few redeeming traits to distinguish it from the Collots and the Billauds, by far the worst of the whole.

Allowance, too, must be made for the exaggerated, the exalted state of political feeling that prevailed among party leaders, and even among their followers, very generally in those dismal times. There can be no more certain proof of this than the fact that even at the present day, when time might be supposed to have calmed all the fervour of the revolutionary crisis, and reflection to have opened men's eyes to the degree in which they had been formerly misled, we find persons of unquestionably virtuous principles unable to bestow the just portion of censure upon the companions of their earlier years, and most reluctant to look back upon those scenes with a natural regret. I have been astonished to hear such persons characterise Collot d'Herbois as a well-meaning though misguided man (*bon homme, mauvaise tête*); and somewhat less struck, indeed, though still surprised, to find them hankering after the belief that whatever was done had been the fault of the Royalists and the Allies, while the all-atoning name of "patriot" covered the multitude of Decemviral sins, and the sole regard of every one who acted in those days was deemed to have been "*La Patrie*."

It would be extremely wrong to suffer ourselves to be warped in our opinions by such prejudices, or to let them arrest the judgment required by the interests of truth and justice. Yet it would be equally contrary to both were we to exclude from our consideration

the extenuating tendency of the undeniable fact, that all men in those times were more or less under the influence of the temporary delirium which the great change had produced; a delirium which rendered them alike insensible to their own sufferings, blind to their own perils, neglectful of their duties, and regardless of other men's rights.

JOHN, FOURTH DUKE OF BEDFORD.

The purpose of the following observations is to rescue the memory of an able, an amiable, and an honourable man, long engaged in the public service, both as a minister, a negotiator, and a viceroy,¹ long filling, like all his illustrious house, in every age of our history, an exalted place among the champions of our free constitution,—from the obloquy with which a licentious press loaded him when living, and from which it is in every way discreditable to British justice, that few if any attempts have, since his death, been made to counteract the effects of calumny, audaciously invented, and repeated till its work of defamation was done, and the falsehood of the hour became confounded with historical fact.

Beside the satisfaction of contributing to frustrate injustice, and deprive malice of its prey, there is this benefit to be derived from the inquiry upon which I am about to enter. We shall be enabled to test the claims of a noted slanderer to public confidence, and to ascertain how little he is worthy of credit in his assaults upon other reputations. But we shall also be enabled to estimate the value of the class to which he belongs, the body of unknown defamers who, lurking in concealment, bound by no tie of honour, influenced by no regard for public opinion, feeling no sense of shame, their motives wholly inscrutable, gratifying, it may be, some paltry personal spite, or actuated by some motive too sordid to be avowed by the most callous of human beings, vent their calumnies against

¹ He was in 1744, when thirty-four years of age, First Lord of the Admiralty, in which capacity he brought forward Keppel, Howe, and Rodney. In 1748 he became Secretary of State, and continued in that office till 1751. In 1756 he went to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, and remained there with extraordinary popularity till 1761, when he was made Lord Privy Seal. Next year he went as Ambassador to Paris, and after his return was made President of the Council. He retained this office till 1766. He was in 1768 chosen Chancellor of the University of Dublin; and died in 1771. All who have ever spoken of this excellent person, with the exception of Junius, have praised his frank and honest nature, wholly void of all dissimulation and all guile; and have borne a willing testimony to the soundness of his judgment, as well as his unshaken firmness of purpose.

men whose whole lives are before the world, who in vain would grapple with the nameless mob of their slanderers, but who, did they only know the hand from whence the blows are levelled, would very possibly require no other defence than at once to name their accuser. That the efforts of this despicable race have sometimes prevailed against truth and justice; that the public, in order to indulge their appetite for abuse of eminent men, have suffered the oft-repeated lie to pass current without sifting its value, and have believed what was boldly asserted, with the hardly-credible folly of confounding with the courage of truth, the cheap daring of concealed calumniators, cannot be doubted. The effects produced by the vituperation of Junius upon the reputation of the Duke of Bedford would at once refute any one who should assert the contrary. It becomes of importance then to prove how entirely groundless all his charges were; to show how discreditable it was to the people of this country that they should be led astray by such a guide; and to draw from this instance of delusion a lesson and a warning against lending an ear to plausible, and active, and unscrupulous calumniators.

Before proceeding with our subject, however, we may stop to consider an example of the effect produced upon public opinion, even permanently, by the invention of some phrase easily remembered, and tending to preserve the malignity of the fiction by the epigram that seems in some sort to embalm an otherwise perishable slander. At a moment of great popular excitement (July, 1769), the Livery of the city of London presented an address to the Sovereign, in which they closed a long list of grievances with the statement that "instead of punishment, honours had been bestowed upon a paymaster, the public defaulter of unaccounted millions." The recent elevation to the peerage of Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland, lately Paymaster of the Forces, was plainly here signified; and it is a humiliating reflection to those who justly prize public opinion, that it should be the sport and the dupe of such audacious impostures. For it is vain to deny that the epithet here bestowed upon that statesman has, in a certain degree, clung to his memory, and given an impression injurious to the purity of his character. The calumny being promulgated by an irresponsible body, and in an address to the throne, no proceedings at law were possible, at least none that would not have been attended with extreme difficulty in a technical view. Lord Holland, however, lost no time in giving the tale his most peremptory contradiction, and by an appeal to facts as notorious to all the world as the sun at noon-day-tide. The falsehood, like most others, rested upon a truth, but a truth grossly perverted. The moneys which had passed through the Paymaster's hands were, in one sense, wholly unaccounted; that is, the accounts of his office had not yet been wound up; but they had been delivered in, were under the examination of the auditors,

and awaited the final report of these functionaries. It was shown that those accounts, which extended over the years 1757, 1758 and 1759, had reference to military expeditions in many distant parts of the globe, and that they related to a larger expenditure than in any former war had ever been incurred. Yet they were declared nine years after they closed. But Mr. Winnington's for 1744, 1745 and 1746, were only declared in 1760, or fourteen years after their close; and Lord Chatham's, which closed in 1755, were not declared in 1769. It is also to be observed, that Lord Chatham had ceased to hold the office in 1755, and had not declared his accounts fourteen years after; whereas Lord Holland had only resigned the paymastership three years and a half before the charge was made. He had also paid over in eight years balances to the amount of above 900,000*l.*, arising from savings which he had effected in the sums voted for different services. It would certainly not be easy to furnish a more complete answer than the calumnious assertion of the Livery thus received. But it is also certain that the calumny long survived its triumphant refutation. Even in the later periods of party warfare it was revived against the illustrious son of its object; men of our day can well remember Mr. Fox having it often flung in his teeth, that he was sprung from the "defaulter of unaccounted millions."

The foul slanders of Junius upon the Duke of Bedford differ from the calumny of the Livery in this; that they plainly furnish to any one who attentively considers them, complete proof of their own falsehood, in by far the most material particular, and consequently should at once fall to the ground as generally discredited. And they would so fall did not men make it a rule to encourage slander and defeat the ends of truth and justice, by lending a willing ear to all that is alleged against their fellow creatures, and overlooking, or straightway forgetting, all that is urged in their defence.

The hatred which this writer evinced towards the Duke rests, as far as it has any public ground to support it, upon the junction of the Bedford party with Lord Bute against Lord Chatham; but in all probability there was some sordid or spiteful feeling of a personal kind at the root of it. Lord Chatham had been, like all the great men of the day, the object of the slanderer's fiercest vituperation. He had repeatedly treated him as a "lunatic," and frequently as a "tyrant;" lurking under the name of Publicola, he had lavished upon him every term of gross abuse which his vocabulary supplied; a "man purely and perfectly bad;" a "traitor;" an "intriguer;" a "hypocrite;" "so black a villain, that a gibbet is too honourable a situation for his carcase" (*Woodfall's Junius*, ii. 458). But in the course of a few months from his last attack, which was in 1770, he became appeased; and, whether from beginning to favour Lord Chatham the year before, or from mere hatred towards Lord Bute, his fury broke forth against the Bedford party, in the letter to its

chief, which has been the subject of so much observation, and is certainly the most scurrilous of any that were printed under the name of Junius.

This letter, beside a number of vague charges, amounting only to intemperate abuse, accuses the Duke in his public capacity of having betrayed his trust as ambassador in negotiating the peace of Paris, and betrayed it for money : in his private capacity it charges him with avarice, and hardness of heart towards his only son, for whose sudden death, by a fall from his horse, no due feeling was evinced ; and in a capacity partly public, partly private, it charges him with grossly insulting the sovereign at an audience of his Majesty. There is, further, an allusion to a scene at Lichfield races, represented as derogatory to his honour as a gentleman.

1. He is accused of giving up Belleisle, Goree, Guadaloupe, St. Lucia, Martinique, the Fishery, the Havanna. The proof of this, the main charge, being corrupt conduct, rests upon the Duke's "pecuniary character," which made it "impossible that so many public sacrifices should be made without some private compensation." This "internal evidence," we are told, is, "beyond all the legal proofs of a court of justice" (i. 510). When pressed by Sir W. Draper for proofs, the slanderer impudently reiterated his assertion, that the Duke's conduct "carried with it an internal and convincing evidence against him," adding, that "if nothing could be true but what might be proved in a court of justice, then the religion itself, which rests upon internal evidence, never could have been received and established" (ii. 25). Finally, he refers to De Torcy's Memoirs for a statement that "a bribe may be offered to a duke and *only not be accepted*," meaning the Duke of Marlborough, from which the inference is that, because some one has said one man was offered a bribe which he refused, therefore, another must be believed to have been offered one and accepted it.

That any degree of public malice should have blinded men to the utter flimsiness of this charge, or that any power of epigrammatic writing should have prevented all readers from flinging it away in scorn, seems really incredible. Yet this is not all, nor even the greater part of the revolting absurdity. The charge is, upon the face of it, false, for it is absolutely impossible. To suppose that an ambassador sent to negotiate a peace has the power to accept any terms whatever which his employers do not authorise him to accept ; but above all, an ambassador sent to Paris and corresponding daily with the cabinet in London, argues a degree of thoughtless folly wholly incredible. As well might the courier who carries the instructions be supposed to have the power of giving up islands and fisheries, as the negotiator. Besides, the whole course of the negotiation in 1762 was conformable to that which, in 1761, had been begun while Lord Chatham was in office. The islands of Guada-

loupes and St. Lucia had been offered by him, and Canada had been offered by France. These were the main body of the cessions on either side. The refusal, in 1761, to make any peace without the King of Prussia, and the treating without him, in 1762, was the main difference in the two cases, and was amply accounted for by the abject state of that prince's fortunes in the former year, and his triumphant position in the latter.

The opinions of all men on the merits of this peace have long since been settled, and even at the time it escaped the fate which faction reserved for the next treaty that was made to terminate a war; it was approved by immense majorities of both Houses of Parliament—without a division in the Lords, by 319 to 65 in the Commons. The most eminent authorities both at home and abroad pronounced unbounded praise upon the ability displayed by the Duke in the negotiation. The king himself was beyond measure pleased with it, and showed his sense of the services rendered in a marked manner. The ministers declared that no man but the Duke could have so conducted the negotiation, and that no man had ever rendered so great a service to the state. The veteran diplomatists, Sir Joseph Yorke and Sir Andrew Mitchell, affixed to the treaty the stamp of their hearty admiration; and Lord Granville, having only lived to witness the event, declared that “the most glorious war had been terminated by the most honourable peace this country ever saw.”

Finally, the story of French gold having been used, not, indeed, to perform the impossible feat of bribing our ambassador's surrender of colonies, but to gain over his employers, had been imputed by an idle busybody, called Dr. Musgrave, sometime before Junius took up the slander, and a committee of the House of Commons, having soon after investigated the matter, reported that it was utterly frivolous and destitute of all foundation. Now this is fatal to the credit of Junius for veracity, and at once and clearly convicts him of fabrication. For the parties named by Musgrave were the Dowager Princess of Wales, Lord Bute, and Lord Holland; the Duke of Bedford not being named or alluded to at all in the story.¹ Yet Junius revives the refuted tale after it had been notoriously repudiated by the political enemies of the parties accused; and he transfers the story to a party on whom, frivolous as it was, the slander never had been made by its author to attach.

In one accidental particular, the ambassador had an opportunity of acting upon his own responsibility, and did act, in the only way in which an honourable man could; and his interposition was effectual to the only extent to which a negotiator ever can effectually operate in his individual capacity,—the extent of preventing a premature signature of the treaty. The East India Company had, by a strange oversight, confined their demand of a stipulation in their

¹ Woodfall (l. 571), with a most inexcusable inaccuracy, gives the story as if it had comprehended the Duke. He never was in any way referred to.

own favour to a period before the acquisition of their chief conquests; and the article in the preliminaries was drawn and signed accordingly. The error being pointed out to the Duke by a private individual, he immediately repaired to the French minister, and insisted upon an alteration of the provisions. The minister, the Duc de Choiseul, relied on the signed preliminaries; but the Duke of Bedford firmly declared that he should at once return to London, and "submit his head to the discretion of Parliament," taking upon himself the error of his instructions. The threat was effectual, and the change was made, which restored a territory of the revenue of half a million sterling, to the Company and the Crown.

2. The charge of parsimony against the Duke rests upon the same foundation, on which a like charge might have been brought against my most dear and respected friend, the late duke, his grandson, one of the most generous of men. His domestic economy was regulated with care, and showed that superintendence of the head of the family over its concerns, and that spirit of order, which, with qualities of a much higher nature, has ever distinguished the House of Russell. That there was any want of liberality in the treatment of the lamented person whose sudden death proved the severest blow to the hopes of his kindred, may be at once denied, on the fact made public at the time, that Lord Tavistock's allowance was 8,000*l.* a year; that his widow's jointure was increased greatly beyond her marriage settlement on his decease; and that 50,000*l.* were immediately provided for the posthumous child of whom she was *enroute* at the time of the accident. The story of the father's affliction having been less poignant than might have been expected, rests on his having, as speedily as he could, sought the distraction which is to be found in the discharge of public duties. But, I can add that woeful experience speaks to the possibility of performing these during a course of years, when domestic affliction has wholly prevented its victim from indulging in the most ordinary relaxations of social life. The brutal slanderer who could interfere at such a moment to outrage the grief of a parent, cared as little for the truth of his charge as he could know of the feelings which he invaded.

Other testimony, and of a very different value, exists to the complete refutation of his cold-blood calumnies. The journal of the Duke has been published, and though up to the hour of his affliction there is a regular entry of each day's occurrences, a whole month appears in blank from the Marquess's accident, which only proved fatal at the end of above a fortnight. Horace Walpole, who writes at the time and was no careless collector of scandal, describes him as "a man of inflexible honesty and love for his country;" vindicates him from all suspicion of parsimony; declares that if he loved money it was only "in order to use it sensibly and with kindness to others," and says not a word to countenance the imputation of his showing an un-

feeling nature.¹ Another witness of greater fame, no less than David Hume, then Under Secretary of State, bears a more direct testimony to the passage in question of the Duke's life. Writing to Madame de Barbantane, he says that "no one at first believed he would have survived the loss;" and in a letter written between three and four months later to Madame de Boufflers, he says, it was fortunate for the Duke that the calumny came upon him "when public business gave his friends an opportunity of making him take a part to distract his attention, but that he has not yet recovered the shock." He adds that the duchess, "to whom the world had not ascribed so great a degree of sensibility, is still inconsolable." Such testimony may well be deemed to countervail the fabrications of Junius. But Junius is read because of his style, which a corrupt taste prizes very far above its value, and the character of a just, a generous, and an amiable man is sacrificed to the morbid taste for slander steeped in epigram.²

3. The story respecting an insult offered to the king is at once refuted by naming that sovereign: it was George III. Who can for a moment believe that any man durst treat him as Junius impudently describes, partly in the foul text, partly in the fouler note? "He demanded an audience of the king, reproached him in plain terms with his duplicity, baseness, falsehood, treachery, hypocrisy, repeatedly gave him the lie, and left him in convulsions." This was in the year 1769, when George III. had nearly attained his thirtieth year. Is it necessary to say more than to express our special wonder at any credit having ever been given to a writer so shamelessly careless of the accuracy or even probability of his statements—a writer who gravely tells things which no mortal can for a moment believe?³ This may at least be said for the periodical press of the present day, — that those who conduct it, and who are, many of them, careless enough of the truth, indifferent enough to the falsehoods which they propagate, and ready enough to circulate the tales they hear against those whom they are pleased to assail, nevertheless feel the necessity of preserving some colour of probability, of keeping some measures in their relations; and would dread the loss of their credit for common sense, as well as veracity, were they to print such tales as Junius possibly believed and certainly without scruple circulated.

¹ In a new publication since this was printed, one letter of Walpole represents the Duke as almost killed by the shock, and only saved by his body breaking out in boils: a subsequent letter treats his attendance in Parliament as unfeeling. But the former passage is fact; the latter is surmise.

² The cause of truth is much indebted to the industry of Mr. Wright, the able and well informed editor of Sir H. Cavendish's admirable debates, in bringing together these extracts from contemporary writers of reputation to refute the calumnies of Junius.

³ He used strong and honest language in remonstrating with the King, but never anything approaching to the violence and insult described by Junius.

4. That some man, said to have been intoxicated, at a race-course, insulted the Duke of Bedford, Lord Trentham (afterwards Lord Stafford), and Mr. Rigby, is very possible. It was the outrage of a Jacobite mob in 1746, enraged at their recent failure, and the parties were tried for the riot.¹ That the chief assailant was of a description which made any personal revenge wholly out of the question has never been doubted. The same accident might have happened to the Duke of Marlborough or Marshal Turenne. Who but a slanderer of the basest order would ever have even made an allusion to such a matter?

It is hardly necessary to add anything in illustration of the utter indifference to all consideration of truth or falsehood which formed part of this writer's nature. But a singular instance of this remains, as it were, on record, and it shows so mean a disposition that we may, with some benefit, contemplate it. That anonymous writers will make assertions which they never would venture upon were their persons known, is a position so highly probable that we require little evidence to make us believe it. But their whole conduct, while skulking behind a veil, proves it. We have not often, however, such a demonstration of this truth as Junius has furnished. He had written a letter in answer to some one pretending to be a female and signing her name Junia, but since avowed to be the production of Caleb Whitefoord. This answer is in a tone of somewhat more than gallantry: it savours of indecency; it has more than mere levity. Whether for this reason, or because the discovery of his having been taken in to write such an amorous epistle to a man seemed likely to cover the party with inextinguishable ridicule, and, from the caprice of the public, to ruin a popularity which the more grave crimes of malice and falsehood had failed to injure; certain it is that he repented having written his answer, and he then scrupled not to dictate a lie which his poor publisher printed as his own assertion knowing it to be false. "We have some reason to suspect (says Mr. Woodfall, four days after the unfortunate letter appeared) that the letter signed 'Junius,' inserted in this paper of Thursday last, was not written by the real Junius; though we imagine it to have been sent by some one of his waggish friends, who has taken great pains to write in a manner similar to that of Junius, which observation escaped us at that time. The printer takes the liberty to hint that it will not do a second time."—*Edit.* (iii. 218). The substance of this falsehood, nay, almost all the words of the first and chief sentence of it, was written by Junius himself, and sent to the printer in a letter containing what in all likelihood is another falsehood, namely, that "there are people about him whom he does not wish to contradict,

¹ The Duke was staying on a visit at Lord Trentham's, and the Gower family had just left the Pretender's party, to so great indignation of the Jacobites, that Dr. Johnson names them to exemplify the word *renegade* in the first edition of his Dictionary. The scuffle was plainly directed, by the Jacobite mob, against the party coming to the race-course from Trentham, and the Duke chanced to be one.

and who had rather see Junius in the papers ever so improperly than not at all" (i. 199). He desires Mr. Woodfall to "hit off something more plausible if he can, but without a positive assertion;" intending, of course, should he ever be discovered and should not be able to fix the contradiction upon his printer, to deny that he had told the lie directly. In the history of anonymous writings there have been few passages more mean, few reflecting more light on the consequences of a habit of anonymous slander. This complicated scene of falsehood was enacting at the very time that the letter to the Duke of Bedford was in preparation; that letter is announced in the 'Advertiser' in consequence of a note dated Sept. 15, at which time it was "copying out." The note desiring the untruth to be inserted is dated Sept. 10th. Surely some discredit naturally rests on the unvouched assertions of a person who, while engaged in committing them to paper, is also occupied with framing elaborate falsehoods for the purpose of extricating himself from a difficulty of his own creating. Such, at least, would be the result in a case of any other description, touching any witness who came forward in his own proper person to accuse his neighbour. But there prevails a most inexplicable disposition in the public to judge nameless calumniators by different rules from those which all mankind apply to known accusers; and to make the very fact of their skulking in the dark, the very circumstance of their being unknown to all the world, a ground of giving credence to them, and a protection to them from the ordinary objections to discreditable testimony. Because they do not appear they are supposed unassailable, whereas the inference should rather be that they have good reason for not showing themselves.

There is no characteristic more universal of such writers than their indiscriminate railing. They are, in very deed, no respecters of persons. Their hand is against every one. Obscure themselves, they habitually envy all fame. Low far beneath any honest man's level, as, they feel conscious, they must sink were the veil removed which conceals them, they delight in pulling all others down to nearly the same degradation with themselves. Nor is it envy alone that stimulates their malignant appetite. Instinctively aware of the scorn in which they are held, and sure that, were the darkness dispelled in which they lurk, all hands would be raised against them, they obey the animal impulse of fear when they indulge in a propensity to work destruction.

To these remarks Junius affords no exception. It is untrue to assert, as some have done, that he had his idols. Lord Chatham has been named, and we have seen how, more than any other statesman of his age, that venerable patriot was assailed by his foulest abuse; assaulted not indeed under the same, but another disguise. For, as unmingled vituperation would pall upon the appetite, as bitters like sweets may require to be dashed and varied, even Junius

found it necessary to give some relief to his pictures, and to paint some figures in a brighter hue ; not to mention that contrast becomes necessary in order to blame the more effectually, or as Sir Philip Francis in his own person used to say, "Praise is bearable when used in *odium tertii*." Eulogy, however, thus bestowed by compulsion, was soon repented and begrudged ; nor could so ungenial a soil long support so exotic a plant. If Junius could not with safety for his consistency extirpate it, he ceased to foster it, and pruned it, or let it die away ; and he had always the resource of changing his mask, and the Publicola could make up by increased virulence and scurrility for the temporary laudation into which Junius had been driven or beguiled.

It is almost equally incorrect to say that Lord Camden was not attacked by Junius. He is in one place represented as "an object neither of respect nor esteem," and as having at different times held every kind of opinion and conduct (iii. 174) ; in another, as the "invader of the constitution, after trampling the laws under his feet" (ii. 472) ; and, in a third, as "an apostate lawyer, weak enough to sacrifice his own character, and base enough to betray the laws of his country" (ii. 457).

The attacks of Junius upon Lord Mansfield have been treated of in a former volume, and it has been shown how utterly void of foundation all those charges were. In fact, the whole originated in the most profound ignorance of the subject which the nameless slanderer, had undertaken to discuss. That his venom, however, produced some effect is undeniable ; the spirit of party, the general desire to see a great man humbled ; above all, the feeling which, it must be confessed, prevails in the people of this country, unfriendly to the judicial dignity, though sufficiently respectful towards the administration of justice in the abstract—all worked with the authors and disseminators of the groundless invectives, and made men not indeed suppose that Lord Mansfield was "the very worst and most dangerous man in the whole kingdom," but that he was open to attack beyond other judges, and was no longer so invulnerable as the voice of the profession had hitherto pronounced him to be. As a proof how much progress unprosecuted slander had made in undermining this great magistrate's reputation, at least for a moment, take the following passage in Horace Walpole's Letters : it was written in the beginning of the session, 1770-1. "If we have nothing else to do after the holidays, we are to amuse ourselves with worrying Lord Mansfield, who, between irregularities in his court, timidity, and want of judgment, has lowered himself to be the object of hatred to many, and of contempt to every body. I do not think that he could re-establish himself if he were to fight Governor Johnstone" (*Letters to Sir H. Mann*. ii. 120).

The effects of continually assailing a judge are somewhat singular. Because it is an unquestionable position that judicial repu-

tation ought never to be rashly attacked, and that all society have an interest in upholding it, there arises a most preposterous notion that when this rule is violated there must be some ground for the imputations cast; and thus the principle which should be the safeguard of the Bench is converted into a means of sapping its authority. Add to this, that no great judge can have long filled his place without giving offence to numerous individuals and to many members of his own profession, even although he may not have had the disposal of patronage, the most fruitful of all the sources of official unpopularity. A judge, too, when assailed is extremely helpless. He is essentially a passive character. He has no means of exhibiting whatever pugnacity he may be endowed with, even in self-defence. This, which with all generous natures, would operate as his safeguard, only furnishes an additional temptation to meaner beings, and encourages them in their assaults. The result certainly is that temporary clouds generally overcast the brightest judicial reputation at some period of its course. But it is equally certain that such clouds speedily pass away; no man now thinks the worse of Lord Mansfield because of Junius.

It is not even true that the family of Lord Holland were always treated with respect, although from the certain fact of the Francis, whom that family patronised, being at least connected with Junius, if not the real authors of the Letters, it could hardly be supposed that it would ever be the object of his assiduous abuse. But nothing can be more contemptuous than his treatment of Mr. Fox, whom he suspected, evidently against all probability, of having written an answer to one of his Letters; and while he plainly states that Lord Holland is "not invulnerable," he throws out a dark threat to the son, and, indeed, to the whole family, to beware how they provoke him (iii. 410); signing the letter "Anti-Fox."

The only public man of any mark whom he spares appears to be Mr. George Grenville. This exemption he certainly owed much less to his truly respectable, and indeed invulnerable character, than to the circumstance of his being anything rather than a brilliant person, and to the accident of his being wholly removed from power and office, and almost from all political influence, during the last years of his honourable and useful life. But it must further be remarked, that he died long before the close of Junius's writings. These extended to May, 1772, under various names, and under the most famous of his signatures, to the month of January in that year; and Mr. Grenville died in November, 1770, before more than half the career of Junius had been accomplished.

So universal was his attack—But although the remark be trite, that he who accuses all men only convicts one, it is, after all, on the audacity of his falsehoods that the bad character of this writer, like that of all his tribe, rests, although to this his temporary influence was in great part owing. His scurrilous abuse of the Duke of Graf-

ton and Lord North can hardly be termed mere licentious ribaldry, for truth is plainly violated when the former is called "the infamous Duke of Grafton," one "branded with the infamy of a notorious breach of trust," one "degraded below the condition of a man"—when the latter is described "as totally regardless of his own honour," noted for "the blackness of his heart," and a "steady perseverance in infamy;" "long since discarding every principle of conscience;" a man "every one action of whose life for two years has separately deserved imprisonment." But many specific accusations were scattered abroad. We have seen the pure invention of the writer's malice in the falsehoods deliberately told against the Duke of Bedford, especially in the fabrication respecting the Peace of Paris; and we have seen how he grafted that untruth upon the story imported by Dr. Musgrave, and relating to other parties. That his motive was to hit in the point which he believed was the most sensitive, is beyond all doubt. The Duke's public character mainly rested on the success of his negotiation; and as he was naturally tenacious of that reputation, so were the people of this country equally alive to any suspicion of pecuniary corruption in public men. Therefore it was that the species of falsehood must be coined which should meet those several demands for it. But we are not left to conjecture upon this point. Under the writer's own hand we have a history of the designs over which his heart brooded. The printer had been deterred from publishing a letter, under the signature of Vindex, by the fear of prosecution. Junius tells him that the charge contained in it is the only one to which its object has not long been callous. The intended victim was the King; the charge was of cowardice! "I must tell you," says Junius, "and with positive certainty, that our gracious—is as callous as stockfish to every thing but the reproach of *cowardice*. That alone is able to set the humours afloat. After a paper of that kind he won't eat meat for a week" (i. 221). I need hardly add that the utter falsehood of such a charge was at all times of George III.'s life admitted by all parties, even in the utmost heat of factious conflict. But this writer, with the malignity of a fiend, frames his slander in order to assail with certainty the tender point of his victim. And such, we may be assured, are the motives which actuate the greater number of those who drive the base trade of the concealed slanderer.

It is truly painful to reflect upon the success which attended the disreputable labours of this author, at a time when good writing was very rare in ephemeral publications, and long before the periodical press had lost its influence and respectability by the excesses into which of late years it has run. The boldness of the assaults made upon individuals, full as much as the power with which they were conducted, had the effect of overawing the public, and in many cases of silencing those against whom they operated. The very circumstance which should have impaired their force, gave them,

as it always does, additional impression. The "*unknown*" and the "*great*" were, as usual, confounded. The same things which, said by any one individual, though respectable in himself, would have had but little weight, seemed to proceed from an awful and undefined power, which might be one or many, and possess an importance that the imagination was left to expand at will. But it is still more painful to observe such men as Lord North and Mr. Burke lending themselves to support the popular delusion, the one from his wonted candour and good humour, the other from factious motives; both, in some degree, from the kind of fear which makes superstitious men sacrifice to evil spirits. Lord North calls him "the great Boar of the Forest," and the "mighty Junius;" Mr. Burke wishes that Parliament had the benefit of "his knowledge, his firmness, his integrity." It would have been a worthier task for Lord North to bring his unblushing falsehoods to trial before a jury of his country, as the Duke of Bedford should certainly have done; and it would have conferred more honour on Mr. Burke to have joined with all good men in reprobating the practices by which one of the foulest of libellers degraded the liberty of the press, and prepared the way for the excesses which Mr. Burke himself was fated afterwards to deplore, and the contempt in which his perspicacity did not then perceive this great safeguard of our liberties was at a still later period in peril of falling.

At all events, we who now have had leisure to contemplate the period in which those great statesmen lived, and to weigh the justice of their tributes to this too celebrated writer, have the duty cast upon us of exposing his falsehoods, and of rendering a necessary, though a tardy reparation, to those characters which he unscrupulously assailed. Nor is there any duty the discharge of which brings along with it more true satisfaction. It may be humble in its execution, but its aim is lofty; it may be feebly performed, but it is exceedingly grateful. Nor can any one rise from his labours with a more heartfelt satisfaction than he who thinks that he has contributed to rescue merit from obloquy, and to further the most sacred of all human interests, the defeat of injustice—injustice in which they share who fear to resist it. "*Sed injustitiæ genera duo sunt; unum eorum qui inferunt; alterum eorum qui ab iis, quibus inferitur, si possunt, non propulsant injuriam.*" (*Cic. De Off.*, I.)

EARL CAMDEN.

Among the names that adorn the legal profession there are few which stand so high as that of Camden. His reputation as a lawyer could not have gained this place for him ; even as a judge he would not have commanded such distinction, though on the Bench he greatly increased the fame which he brought from the bar ; but in the senate he had no professional superior, and his integrity for the most part spotless in all the relations of public life, with the manly firmness which he uniformly displayed in maintaining the free principles of the constitution, wholly unmixed with any leaning towards extravagant popular opinions, or any disposition to court vulgar favour, justly entitle him to the very highest place among the judges of England.

It was a remarkable circumstance that, although he entered the profession with all the advantages of elevated station, he was less successful in its pursuit, and came more slowly into its emoluments than almost all others that can be mentioned who have raised themselves to its more imminent heights from humble and even obscure beginnings. One can hardly name any other chief judge, except Bacon himself, who was the son of a chief justice. Lord Camden's father presided in the Court of King's Bench. He himself was called to the bar in his twenty-fourth year, and he continued to await the arrival of clients,—their “knocks at his door while the cock crew,”¹—for nine long years; but to wait in vain. In his thirty-eighth year he was, like Lord Eldon, on the point of retiring from Westminster Hall, and had resolved to shelter himself from the frowns of fortune within the walls of his College, there to live upon his fellowship till a vacant living in the country should fall to his share. This resolution he communicated to his friend Henley, afterwards so well known first as Lord Keeper, and then as Lord Chancellor Northington, who vainly endeavoured to rally him out of a despondency, for which it must be confessed there seemed good ground. He consented, however, at his friend's solicitation, to go once more the western circuit, and through his kind offices received a brief as his junior in an important cause—offices not perhaps in those days so severely reprobated as they now are by the more stern etiquette of the profession.

The leader's accidental illness threw upon Mr. Pratt the conduct of the cause ; and his great eloquence, and his far more important

¹ Sub galli cantum, consultor ubi ostia pulsat. - *Hor.*

qualifications of legal knowledge and practical expertness in the management of business, at once opened for him the way to a brilliant fortune. His success was now secure. After eight years of very considerable practice, though unequal to that which most other great leaders have attained, he was made at once Attorney-General; and three years after, in 1762, raised to the Bench as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, "the pillow," according to Lord Coke, "whereon the attorney doth rest his head." In 1769, when in his (5) forty-sixth year, he had been chosen to represent the borough of Downton, but during his short experience of the House of Commons he appears not to have gained any distinction. The rewards of parliamentary ambition were reserved to a later period of his life.

Of his forensic talents no records remain, beyond a general impression of the accuracy which he showed as a lawyer, though not of the most profound description; *par negotiis neque supra*. The fame of his legal arguments in Westminster Hall is not of that species which at once rises to the mind on the mention of Dunning's name, or Wallace's, the admirable variety and fertility of whose juridical resources were such that "their points" are spoken of to this day, and spoken of with admiration. But he greatly excelled them both in powers as a leader at Nisi Prius; and his eloquence was apparently of that chaste and gentle but persuasive kind which distinguished his great rival Murray, and made all the readers of Milton involuntarily apply to him the famous portraiture of Belial—

Belial, in act more graceful and humane—
A fairer person lost not heaven; he seemed
For dignity composed and high exploit.

His tongue

Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason.

But his eminently judicial qualifications shone forth conspicuously when he rose into their proper sphere. His unwearied patience, his unbroken suavity of manner, his unruffled calmness of temper, the more to be admired because it was the victory of determined resolution over a natural infirmity, his lucid clearness of comprehension and of statement, his memory, singularly powerful and retentive, his great anxiety to sift each case to the very bottom, and his scrupulous, perhaps extreme care, to assign the reasons for every portion of his opinions, went far to constitute a perfect judge, inferior in value though these qualities might be to the profound learning that has marked some great magistrates, like Lord Eldon and the older lawyers; and, perhaps, to the union of marvellous quickness, with sure sagacity, for which others, like the Kenyons, and the Holroyds, and the Littledales, have been famous. There was, however, in Lord Camden no deficiency of legal accomplishments, nor any want either of quickness or of perspicacity in the conduct of judicial business. And it must ever be remembered, that as a judge

has always, or almost always, the statements and the suggestions of all parties before him, and is thus rather placed in a passive situation, those faculties of rapid perception and of deep penetration, that circumspection which no risk can escape, and that decision, at once prompt and firm, which instantly meets the exigencies of each sudden emergency, are far less essential virtues, far less useful attributes, of the ermine than of the gown. It is but rarely that a judge can be taken off his guard; never in any important civil suit, unless by some accident there is an extreme overmatch of the advocate upon one side compared with his antagonist; and chiefly possible in criminal cases, disposed of by a law which lies within a narrow compass, and connected with facts generally of ordinary occurrence and easy to deal with. It would thus be extremely erroneous to under-rate Lord Camden's judicial qualities, merely because there have been many more consummate masters of English jurisprudence upon the bench, and some even of more extraordinary sagacity, quickness, and penetration.

In the great qualities of sustained dignity, chaste, and therefore, not exaggerated propriety of demeanour, absolute impartiality, and fearless declaration of his conscientious opinion, how surely soever it might expose him to the frowns of power, or the yet more galling censure of his profession, this eminent magistrate never had a superior, very seldom an equal. That profession is ever singularly jealous on such points, and particularly prone to suspect such conduct as proceeding from a love of popularity, which these learned men, having but rarely been able to taste, are extremely apt to pronounce unsavoury, citing the illustrious chancellor and philosopher, of whom they peradventure have only read the one saying, that "a popular judge is a deformed thing, and *plaudites* are fitter for players than for magistrates." This propensity of the bar Lord Camden well knew; but he felt, above all dread of its effects, conscious that he was instigated by no childish love of plebeian applause, and only acted the part of an honest man, in showing by his judgments those sentiments which ever filled his breast—a sincere love of public liberty, and an entire devotion to the principles of the British constitution.

The decision of this great judge upon the question of general warrants, raised by the attempt of Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State, to search the house of Wilkes, and commit him to prison without a specification of his person or of his offence, further than stating it to be the publication of a seditious and treasonable paper, is well known to every reader; and no less known is the marked contrast of the dignified and severe justice of the bench, and the trumpery vapouring talk of the profligate trader in mob favour, whose oppression, by illegal exercise of power, had arrayed in his defence even those who most scorned his character and distrusted his professions. It was on the ground of his arrest being a breach of his

parliamentary privilege that he obtained his discharge. This cause came before Lord Camden, as did the actions brought in consequence against the Secretary of State's messengers, who had executed the general warrant, the year after the Chief Justice came upon the bench. On the *habeas corpus* he had expressed an opinion, in which his brethren concurred, that such warrants were justified by numerous precedents. But when he tried at *Nisi Prius* the actions for false imprisonment, in which the legality of general warrants came in question, he declared his opinion to be that they were illegal, adding these memorable words—"If the other judges, and the highest authority in this kingdom, the House of Peers, should pronounce my opinion erroneous, I submit, as will become me, and kiss the rod; but I must say, that I shall always consider it as a rod of iron for the chastisement of the people of Great Britain."

The tenour of the warrant was, "to make strict and diligent search for the authors and printers of a certain seditious and treasonable paper, entitled No. 45 of the North Briton, and them, or any of them being so found, to apprehend and secure, together with their papers, and to bring them in safe custody to be examined, and further dealt with according to law." The special jury who tried the cause, returned, after a trial of fifteen hours, a verdict for the plaintiff, with 1000*l.* damages, in entire accordance with the Chief Justice's direction.

When a new trial was moved for misdirection, his Lordship spoke these memorable words—"To enter a man's house, by virtue of a nameless warrant, in order to procure evidence, is worse than the Spanish inquisition—a law under which no Englishman would wish to live an hour. It is a daring public attack upon the liberty of the subject, and in violation of the 29th chapter of Magna Charta (*Nullus liber homo*, etc.), which is directly pointed against that arbitrary power."¹

The applause of his countrymen, that applause, which Lord Mansfield so eloquently described as following great actions and not run after, was dealt out to the Chief Justice in a liberal measure. The corporations of Dublin, Bath, Exeter, Norwich, besought him to accept their freedom. London herself enrolled him among her citizens, and placed upon the walls of Guildhall his portrait, magnificently painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with an inscription at once simple, chaste, and true: "*In honorem tanti viri Anglicæ libertatis lege assertoris.*"

Two years only elapsed before he was raised to the peerage; and in 1766, he succeeded his early and steady friend, Lord Northington, as chancellor. He held the great seal about four years.

If his decisions in the Court of Chancery, during that period,

¹ *Buckle v. Money*, 2 Wils. 205. The imprisonment had only been for six hours, and the treatment unexceptionable; but the Chief Justice had charged the jury on its being a violation of public liberty.

have never been the subject of great panegyric, they certainly have escaped all censure; and he was of too firm a mind, and, at the same time, too discreet and modest, to fall into the great error which shipwrecked the judicial fame of future equity judges, well versed in the practice of their courts. He neither, like some of his successors, so vacillated, so disliked to pronounce the opinion he had formed, as to put off the evil day of decision, and overwhelm his court with causes heard and undetermined; nor did he place, like others, his chief praise in unhesitating and promiscuous dispatch of business, directing all his efforts to suppressing the arguments which it was his duty to hear, and estimating his merits by the number, rather than the excellence, of his judgments, so as to draw from Sir Samuel Romilly the comparison, that he preferred the slow justice of the chancellor to his deputy's speedy injustice. From these opposite rocks the calm and even course of Lord Camden's administration of justice preserved him safe. And, beside obtaining the praise of having dispatched all the court's business, in a manner to give the suitors and the bar satisfaction, he has left judgments on important questions, of great merit. It may be enough to mention the well known case upon Bills of Review, *Smith v. Clay*, which fixes the law of the court upon that very important question; and which he decided in an argument, tolerably well preserved in some reports, an argument combining the highest qualities of judicial eloquence. His judgment, in the great case of *Duke of Northumberland v. Earl of Egremont*, after an argument of several days, also possesses rare excellence.¹

In parliament, his judicial as well as political conduct may be deservedly regarded as a model. In the celebrated *Douglas* cause, his argument on moving the reversal of the Court of Session's judgment, and establishing the legitimacy of the party claiming the Duke of Douglas's large estates, possesses the greatest merit. Lord Mansfield's engaged more of the public attention at the time, chiefly because of the famous letters of Andrew Stuart, to which it gave rise, and in which he was most severely and ably attacked. But whoever reads both speeches will find it difficult to refuse the preference to the Chancellor's; although there is every reason to believe that the Chief Justice's has been very imperfectly preserved. Both are to be found in the second volume of the *Collectanea Juridica*. But Andrew Stuart treats Lord Mansfield's as never having been published fairly, and from authority; and he darses him to the publication, in terms which seem to imply an intimation that there was something not convenient to give through the press, and a suspicion that the cautious Chief Justice would not venture

¹ Ambler, 647 and 657, contains a very abridged account of these cases. I was favoured with Sir S. Romilly's full notes of my illustrious predecessor's judgment in *Smith v. Clay*, and communicated it to the Court during the first year that I held the Great Seal.

upon the course pointed out.¹ It is moreover quite certain that the printed account to which I have referred contains no mention of Andrew Stuart, hardly any reference to him, while Lord Camden's speech is filled with direct charges distinctly brought against him; and yet the defence is entirely made as against Lord Mansfield, and no assault whatever is made upon Lord Camden. Lord Mansfield's judgment, as reported, is a most wretched performance, and chiefly rests on this position, that a woman of Lady Jane Douglas's illustrious descent could not be guilty of a fraud.

I have spoken of Lord Camden's judicial conduct in the Courts of Westminster Hall, and in the House of Lords. He was, however, fully more eminent in the senate than in the forum. He brought into parliament a high professional reputation; and beside the reputation which this and his great office gave him, his talents were peculiarly suited to shine in debate. An admirable memory, ample quickness of apprehension, sufficient learning for all ordinary occasions, a clear and pleasing elocution, great command of himself, a natural vivacity which gave his manner animation without effort, rendered him one of the most impressive and pleasing speakers of his time. His conduct, too, had been uniform and consistent; he was always, whether on the Bench, or in the Council, or in Parliament, the friend of constitutional liberty, of which he steadily proved the honest but the temperate defender. He had taken a part which indicated some considerable difference with his colleagues, on the important question of American taxation; but after he had been Chancellor between three and four years, this difference occasioned his removal from office; and then disclosures were made which, it cannot be denied, served to cast some shade over a portion at least of his official conduct. The circumstances attending this passage in Lord Camden's life are extremely instructive, as throwing light upon the principles of the times, and in this view they deserve to be more closely considered.

When upon the assembling of parliament in January, 1770, Lord Chatham moved an amendment, pledging the Lords, with all convenient speed, to take into consideration the causes of the prevailing discontents, and particularly the proceedings of the Commons touching Wilkes's election, and closed his remarkable reply by affirming that, "where the law ends the tyranny begins," Lord Camden rose and declared, with a warmth unusual to him, that he had accepted the Great Seal without condition, and meant not to be trammelled by the king (then correcting his expression)—by his ministers; but he added, "I have suffered myself to be so too long. I have beheld, with silent indignation, the arbitrary measures of the

¹ "If the multiplicity of your other affairs be assigned as an excuse for avoiding to give any answer, there is yet another method which may serve to afford me satisfaction and, may possibly do justice to yourself without consuming much of your time. *It is to publish to the world your speech against me in the Douglas cause.*"—Letter iv. page 38. (The Italics as in the original.)

minister. I have long drooped and held down my head in council, and disapproved with my looks those steps which I knew my avowed opposition could not prevent. I will do so no longer, but openly and boldly speak my sentiments." He then supported Lord Chatham's amendment; declared that, if as a judge he should pay any respect to the vote of the Commons, he should look upon himself as a traitor to his trust and an enemy to his country; accused the ministers of causing the existing discontents; and all but in terms, certainly by implications, charged them with having formed a conspiracy against the liberties of the people. The ministers whom he thus accused had, through all the time of their measures causing the discontents, and their conspiracy against public liberty, been his colleagues, and still were his colleagues; for, strange to tell, he made this speech without having taken any step to resign the Great Seal. It is not to be wondered at that those colleagues should complain of such unexampled conduct, though they might have had themselves to thank for it; but it is singular that a month elapsed before the complaint could find a vent. On Lord Rockingham's motion for a Committee on the State of the Nation, at the beginning of February, Lord Sandwich charged the late Chancellor with duplicity in permitting the proceedings against Wilkes to proceed without remonstrance, and refusing to give any opinion respecting them. Lord Camden positively asserted, upon his honour, that he had informed the Duke of Grafton of his opinion, that those proceedings were both illegal and imprudent. The Duke admitted that he had once intimated, but not in express terms, that he thought the measure impolitic or ill-timed; but that he had never given his opinion on the vote of incapacity;—on the contrary, that whenever the subject was agitated in the cabinet he had remained silent, or retired; and Lord Weymouth confirmed the Duke's statement, adverting to one particular occasion upon which, on the bare mention of expulsion or incapacity, Lord Camden had withdrawn from the discussion. Lord Camden repeated his assertion, that he had always entertained a strong opinion against the proceedings, and had frequently expressed it; but he admitted that, finding his opinions rejected or despised, he had absented himself from a cabinet where his presence could only distract his colleagues from a course already resolved on, and which his single voice could not prevent. Lord Chatham asserted, that Lord Camden had frequently made the same statement to him, supporting it by cogent reasons.

Upon this very extraordinary passage various remarks arise. But first of all it is natural to observe upon the singular state of a government thus conducted. The administration of public affairs in a very critical emergency, or what in those comparatively quiet times was so regarded, appears to have been committed to men who had little or no confidence in each other; and the first minister, in

point of rank, the chief law adviser of the crown, the very head of the law, differed openly from all his colleagues upon the two great questions of the day, yet withheld his opposition to their measures, and even absented himself from their consultations as often as those matters were discussed. If anything could make this state of affairs more intolerable, and more inconsistent with the public good, it was the undoubted fact that the more pressing of the two questions, the proceeding respecting Wilkes, was entirely of a legal and constitutional nature, on which the Chancellor's opinion was the most indispensably required, and was a question intimately connected with, if not mainly arising out of, judicial proceedings over which the Chancellor had, while Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, presided.

The next remark which suggests itself is, that the cabinet had no great right to complain of the line taken by Lord Camden; for he plainly had given his colleagues to understand that he differed with them, and that on this account he withheld his opinion from them. They had a right to object; they were entitled to require his aid, and on his refusing it, to demand his resignation. They chose to retain him amongst them, and therefore they took him on his own terms. But the party which had a right to complain of Lord Camden had an equal right to complain of all his colleagues, and that party was the country. A cabinet so constructed and so acting was wholly incapable of well administering the affairs of the nation, and it was the duty of his colleagues to require either his full co-operation or his retirement; and above all it was the duty of Lord Camden to relinquish his exalted station whenever he did not choose to perform its highest duties. To remain in office while he disapproved of the government's proceedings; to be responsible for measures on which he pronounced no opinion, but held an adverse one; to continue a nominal minister of the crown while the most important acts were doing in his name, which he believed must involve the country in a war with her colonies, and endanger also the peace of the empire at home—acts which he regarded as hostile to the principles of the constitution and subversive of the people's most sacred rights—was surely an offence of as high a nature as ever statesman committed. If it be said that he continued responsible for those measures, the answer is, that this rather aggravates than extenuates the charge; for he was responsible only because he in truth joined to execute them. Instead of opposing them as was his bounden duty, he aided in giving them effect.

It is impossible to contemplate this subject without once more being struck with the very low point at which political virtue in those times was pitched. The most constitutional judge who had up to that time ever sat upon the bench, one of the purest politicians that had ever appeared, is found to have persevered in a course of official conduct which all men in our day would regard as an enormous de-

linquency. Instead of his becoming the object of universal reprobation, the only censure called down upon him by the disclosure was a single attack in one debate, in which the great leader of the high constitutional party warmly defended him, and his supporters joined with their applause. The spirit of party no doubt greatly contributed to this result; the joy of the opposition was buoyant over so great a shock as Lord Camden's opposition to his colleagues gave the ministry; and accordingly we find Lord Shelburne expressing a hope, that "the Great Seal would go a begging, and that no one would be found base and mean-spirited enough to accept it upon such conditions as might gratify the ministers, as soon as the present worthy Chancellor should be dismissed;" for it is none of the least strange parts of the transaction, though apparently a thing not unusual in those times, that the Chancellor's opposition to the government was offered while he remained in office; he was not dismissed till a week after he had avowed his difference with his colleagues, and charged them by implication with a conspiracy against public liberty.

Nevertheless, it must be observed, that the lower tone of political morality and the prevalence of faction will not wholly account for the singular circumstances which we have been considering. The exclusion of the public from a view of all that passed in parliament must be taken into the account.¹ If instead of an occasional and surreptitious glance at the debates of their representatives and of the peers, the people had daily read a full account of these proceedings, and if the conduct of public men had been constantly subjected to the scrutiny of the nation through the press, it can nowise be doubted that the extraordinary disclosures made upon Lord Camden's quitting office would have excited universal indignation. It can as little be questioned that, had he and his colleagues been always acting under the vigilant eye of the nation at large, and accountable to it as well as to their party-adherents and party-adversaries, the men equally engaged in playing against each other the game of faction, regardless of the country—no such state of things could have existed in the cabinet as we have been contemplating, and no man could have ventured to hold such a course as we have seen Lord Camden, safe and uncensured, pursued.

Finally, we may draw from these particulars in his history, an inference suggested also by the Diaries recently published of his two predecessors, Lord King and Lord Cowper, that the importance of the Chancellor in former times was far inferior to that which this

¹ It is hardly to be believed that as late as 1770 the *Annual Register* should not venture to do more than indistinctly and without names hint at any part of the proceedings which we have been describing. Lord Camden's statement, and Lord Sandwich's accusation of him, are not even alluded to. The Sovereign is only mentioned by the letter K., Parliament by P., and the House of Commons by H. of C.

high functionary now enjoys. A mere lawyer may now, as formerly, hold the great seal, and may now, as then, have little of the weight which he ought, for the safety of the cabinet and the good of the country, to possess. But if any one, of statesmanlike accomplishments, is now raised to that high office, or even any one who, like Lord Eldon, had previously never given his mind to state affairs, yet possessed a capacity for bearing a part in their direction, the influence which he must enjoy knows hardly any bounds but those which his own inclination or the jealousy of his colleagues may prescribe. It was not so a century ago,—perhaps, with the exception of Lord Hardwicke, it was not so before the time of Lord Loughborough. We find Lord King speaking of Sir Robert Walpole's consulting him, and so far confiding in him as to inform him of important matters in agitation, with a complacency which plainly shows that he was very far from considering such treatment a matter of course, as with any Chancellor whatever it would assuredly be in our times. In like manner we can have no doubt, that had the office been regarded in the same light at George the Third's accession as it was in the latter part of his reign, so eminent a person as Lord Camden when holding it, a person as well known in the political as in the legal world, and, from his former conduct, next to Lord Chatham, the peculiar favourite of the English people, could never have acted the part he did on the greatest questions of the day, or been the silent, unsupported, and impotent disapprover of the course held by his colleagues on those great questions.¹

When he had once openly taken his part there was no faltering or hesitation in his future course. During the whole of the proceedings, both before and after the American war broke out, he appeared the steady and powerful champion of the free and sound opinions which were natural to his feelings and his habits of thinking. Nor did any childish fear of lowering the dignity of an Ex-chancellor, much less any mean hankering after royal favour, prevent him from bearing his part in the parliamentary struggle which for twelve years was maintained against the court. He was upon every occasion, as it were, the right arm of Lord Chatham; and many of his speeches, even in the meagre reports of the times, impress us with a high idea of his eloquence and of his powers as a debater. His constitutional opinions had, while in the House of

¹ It is fit to add, however, that on his retirement some important resignations took place. The Dukes of Beaufort and Manchester, Lords Granby, Huntingdon and Coventry resigned their household places. James Grenville gave up the office of Vice Treasurer of Ireland, and Dunning that of Solicitor-General in this country. The Great Seal, taken from Lord Camden (for, possibly with a view to embarrass the government, he did not resign), was pressed by the King on Charles Yorke, and reluctantly accepted 17th January; he died suddenly, as is supposed by his own hand, on the 20th; and Lord Mansfield, and Sir Eardley Wilmot (Chief Justice of the Common Pleas) having both refused the Great Seal, it was put in commission for a year, when Mr. Justice Bathurst at length accepted it.

Commons, sometimes been pushed to the very verge of moderation even while Attorney-General. Take an example:—in the debate on American taxation, in 1766, there was a threat of proceeding against the printer of a report containing his speech, which George Grenville complained of as a breach of privilege. “I will maintain it to my latest hour; taxation and representation are inseparable. This position is founded on the laws of nature; it is more, it is itself an eternal law of nature; for whatever is a man’s own is absolutely his own; no man has a right to take it from him without his consent, either expressed by himself or his representative. Whoever attempts to do it attempts an injury; whoever does it commits a robbery; he throws down and destroys the distinction between liberty and slavery.” Here again is his doctrine of parliamentary representation:—“To fix the era when the Commons began is perilous and destructive; to fix it in Edward’s or Henry’s reign is owing to the idle dreams of some whimsical, ill-judging antiquaries; but this is a point too important to be left to such wrong-headed people. When did the House of Commons begin? When, my Lords? It began with the constitution. There is not a blade of grass growing in the most obscure corner of this kingdom which is not, which was not ever, represented since the constitution began. There is not a blade of grass which when taxed was not taxed by consent of the proprietor.”

It may easily be imagined that he was no sooner freed from the trammels of office than a spirit so congenial to that which animated Lord Chatham would burst forth. He accordingly joined him in denouncing as a violent outrage on the constitution the vote of the Commons incapacitating Wilkes from sitting in parliament, because he had been expelled after his election. This celebrated vote, the soundness of which Charles Fox, such is the force of early prejudices, maintained to his dying day, appears to have staggered even Lord Mansfield, who, when Lord Chatham moved an address to the Lords, declaring it unconstitutional, seemed through almost his whole speech to be arguing against it and in favour of the motion. He said, that he should regard himself as the greatest of tyrants and of traitors were he to be moved by it in his judicial capacity, though he added, mysteriously, “that he had never given his opinion upon it, and should probably carry it with him to the grave. But he considered that if the Commons had passed an unjustifiable resolution, it was a matter between God and their own consciences; and that the Lords could not carry up in an address a railing accusation to the throne, thereby exciting a flame between the two Houses, not easily allayed.” Lord Chatham and Lord Camden held that all the arguments of Lord Mansfield being in favour of their amendment, his vote should have accompanied his speech; and Lord Camden was so much impregnated with his illustrious friend’s sentiments, that though he would not quite go so far as to exclaim,

"Let discord reign for ever," he yet declared "that to the voice of the people he would join his feeble efforts, and the louder he heard them cry, the better should he be pleased."

After Lord Chatham's death, in 1778, rather from loss of his great leader than from any infirmity of increasing age, he rarely took any part in debate. That the latter was not the cause of his inaction, we may well suppose from the great excellence of the speeches which he occasionally delivered. One of these must have possessed extraordinary merit, that on Lord Shelburne's amendment to the address, 27th of November, 1781; for it extorted from the most niggardly dispenser of praise perhaps the only panegyric of which he was ever guilty. Lord Thurlow said, "he never had heard a more able discourse within these walls; that the premises were distinct and clear, while the deductions followed without constraint or false colouring." "In thus speaking of the noble Lord's very great abilities," said the eminently dyslogistic Chancellor, "I trust he will receive it as my real sentiments, not being at any time much disposed to travel out of the business before the House for the purpose of keeping up the trivial forms of debate, much less to pay particular personal compliments to any man."

When the disasters of the American war, more than the attacks of the opposition, had driven Lord North from the helm, Lord Camden became President of the Council in the Rockingham Administration, and quitted that office when the Coalition ministry was formed next year, having consistently remained in the cabinet of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Pitt, when the personal and factious violence of the Whigs led them to oppose the peace, and finally to overthrow the ministry that made it, by a Coalition which ruined the Whig character and influence for nearly a quarter of a century. Upon Mr. Pitt triumphantly defeating the Coalition, Lord Camden resumed his office, and kept it to his death.

Between the close of the American war and the regency in 1788, with the exception of delivering an admirable speech against Mr. Fox's India Bill, and one or two others during the same struggles, he seldom bore any part in debate. But on the King's illness being declared to Parliament, he took the lead in all the proceedings connected with that event, Lord Thurlow being evidently little trusted by Mr. Pitt, who had discovered his intrigues with the opposition and Carlton House. Lord Camden in particular argued, and with great learning and ability, the constitutional questions which arose from time to time during the fierce controversy of that day, and he was perhaps never heard to greater advantage than in the debate on the Heir Apparent's right, and Mr. Fox's incautious assertion of it, a doctrine which met with its most formidable adversary in the veteran champion of our popular constitution. Nor must it be forgotten, that he had now reached his 75th year.

It does not appear that the lapse of four years more had either

impaired his faculties or extinguished his love of liberty : for he it was who, a leading member of the Government, in the face of the unanimous opinion of all the Judges, supported as they were in the House itself by Lord Thurlow, Lord Kenyon, and Lord Bathurst, maintained the rights of juries in libel cases by the law of England, and carried through, in spite of a most formidable opposition from those law Lords, the celebrated measure of Lord Erskine, which is commonly, though erroneously, called Mr. Fox's Libel Act.

Nothing can be more refreshing to the lovers of liberty, or more gratifying to those who venerate the judicial character, than to contemplate the glorious struggle for his long-cherished principles with which Lord Camden's illustrious life closed. The fire of his youth seemed to kindle in the bosom of one touching on fourscore, as he was impelled to destroy the servile and inconsistent doctrines of others, slaves to mere technical lore, but void of the sound and discriminating judgment which mainly constitutes a legal, and above all a judicial, mind. On such passages as follow, the mind fondly and reverently dwells, thankful that the pedantry of the profession had not been able to ruin so fine an understanding, or freeze so genial a current of feeling,—and hopeful that future lawyers and future judges may emulate the glory and the virtue of this greatman.

"It should be imprinted," he said, "on every juror's mind that, if a jury find a verdict of publishing and leave the criminality to the judge, they would have to answer to God and their consciences for the punishment which by such judge may be inflicted,—be it fine, imprisonment, loss of ears, whipping, or any other disgrace."—"I will affirm," added Lord Camden, "that they have the right of deciding, and that there is no power by the law of this country to prevent them from the exercise of the right if they think fit to maintain it. When they are pleased to acquit any defendant, their acquittal will stand good until the law of England shall be changed."—"Give, my Lords," he exclaimed, "give to the jury or to the judge the right of trial. You must give it to one or to the other, and I think you can have no difficulty which to prefer. Place the press under the power of the jury, where it ought to be."

On a future stage of the bill, 16th May, 1792, he began a most able and energetic address to the House in terms which deeply moved all his hearers—because, he said, how unlikely it was that he should ever address them any more. After laying down the law as he conceived it certainly to be, he added, "So clear am I of this, that if it were not the law, it should be made so; for in all the catalogue of crimes there is not one so fit to be determined by a jury as libel." "With them leave it, and I have not a doubt that they will always be ready to protect the character of individuals against the pen of slander, and the government against the licentiousness of sedition."

The opinions of the judges were overruled, and the act was of purpose made declaratory and not enactive after the opposition of

the law lords had thus been defeated. The Chancellor, as the last effort to retain the law in judicial hands, asked if Lord Camden would object to a clause being inserted granting a new trial in case the court were dissatisfied with a verdict for the defendant?—"What," (exclaimed the veteran friend of freedom) "after a verdict of acquittal?" "Yes," said Lord Thurlow. "No, I thank you," was the memorable reply,—and the last words spoken in public by this great man. The bill immediately was passed.

Two years after, he descended to the grave full of years and honours, the most precious honours which a patriot can enjoy, the unabated gratitude of his countrymen, and the unbroken consciousness of having through good report and evil firmly maintained his principles and faithfully discharged his duty.

In the whole of Lord Camden's life there is no passage more remarkable or more edifying than his manly adherence to his own clear and well considered opinion, in spite of the high professional authority by which it was impugned. There are many professional men who, after having long quitted the contentions of Westminster Hall, and been for a great portion of their lives removed from a close contact with their legal brethren, feel nervous at the idea of exposing themselves to be decried for ignorance or despised for heterodoxy, by the frowns of the legal community, adjusted to the solemn authority and example of those set in place over them. It was the only mark of declining vigour which Lord Erskine betrayed, that in the course of the Queen's case he dreaded to come in conflict with the judges, even on some points which there is now no reason to doubt were wrong decided, and which he accurately perceived at the time were erroneously determined.¹ At a more advanced age, Lord Camden retained the full vigour of his faculties, so as boldly to announce his deliberate opinion; and that it was in no degree biassed by any party leaning, or any hunting after popular applause, will appear manifest from the circumstance of the Libel Bill being passed by him in the manner we have just been contemplating during the most vehement period of the controversy upon sedition that began the French Revolution, and in the same year in which the proclamation against seditious writings was issued, and the first prosecutions for libel instituted by the government of which Lord Camden was so conspicuous a member.²

¹ For example of misdecision, take the rule laid down, that no question on cross-examination can be put to a witness, the answer to which may refer to a written document, without producing the document and placing it in the witness's hands, whereby the test applied whether to his veracity or to his memory is defeated.

² It is very gratifying to me that I can mention so valuable a step towards improvement in the law of slander and libel as my learned and esteemed friend Lord Campbell has recently succeeded in carrying through Parliament, with the entire concurrence of the other law lords. The bill which I brought into the Commons twice, first in 1816 and again in 1830, on the eve of my quitting that house, embraced this and also other changes in the law, which I doubt not will now soon follow, and I most cheerfully resigned the subject into my colleague's hands. The measure

In close connexion with the most remarkable passage of Lord Camden's life, was the conduct and in general the history of Wilkes. We are thus led to speak somewhat of that unprincipled adventurer, not certainly as having any place among the statesmen of the age, but as accidentally connected with their history.

The history of Wilkes is well known, and his general character is no longer any matter of controversy. Indeed, it is only justice towards him to remark, that there was so little about him of hypocrisy—the “homage due from vice to virtue” being by him paid as reluctantly and as sparingly as any of his other debts—that, even while in the height of his popularity, hardly any doubt hung over his real habits and dispositions. About liberty, for which he cared little, and would willingly have sacrificed less, he made a loud and blustering outcry, which was only his way of driving a trade; but to purity of private life, even to its decencies, he certainly made no pretence; and, during the time of the mob's idolatry of his name, there never existed any belief in his good character as a man, however much his partisans might be deceived in their notion that he was unlikely to sell them. He had received a good education—was a fair classical scholar—possessed the agreeable manners of polished society—married an heiress half as old again as himself—obliged her, by his licentious habits and profligate society, to live apart from him—made an attempt, when in want of money, to extort from her the annuity he had allowed for her support—is recorded in the Term Reports of the Court of King's Bench,¹ to have been signally defeated in this nefarious scheme—continued to associate with gentlemen of fortune far above his own—passed part of his life as a militia colonel—and fell into the embarrassed circumstances which, naturally resulting from such habits, led in their turn to the violent political courses pursued by him in order to relieve his wants. Contemporaneous, however, with the commencement of his loud toned patriotism, and his virulent abuse of the Court, were his attempts to obtain promotion. One of these was his application to Lord Chatham for a seat at the Board of Trade. Soon after that lure, he was defeated in his designs upon the Embassy at Constantinople, which his zeal for the liberties of the English people, and his wish to promote them in the most effectual manner, induced him to desire; and a third time he was frustrated in an attempt to make head against the corruptions of the British Court, by repairing as governor to the remote province of Canada. Lord Bute and his

was matured ably and judiciously under his auspices in a committee over which he presided; and in which, beside their report recommending the bill, a valuable body of evidence and opinions was collected. It must, however, be added, that a great loss to the reform of the law is incurred by leaving out the most valuable portion of my former Bills, that which protected political or public libel to the extent of allowing evidence of the truth. The Report of the Criminal Law Commissioners on this question, and on the whole subject, is elaborate and full of interest.

¹ 1 Burr. 452. Easter, 31 Geo. II., Rex, v. Mary Mead.

party had some hand in these disappointments; and to running them down his zealous efforts were now directed.

With such a history, both in public and private, there was a slender chance of figuring to any good purpose as a patriot; but he took the chance of some of those lucky hits, those windfalls, which occasionally betide that trade, in the lucrative shape of ill-judged prosecution. He fared forth upon his voyage in the well-established line of Libel, and he made a more than usually successful venture; for he was not only prosecuted and convicted in the ordinary way, but a blundering Secretary of State issued, as we have seen, a general warrant to seize his papers—was of course resisted,—allowed the matter to come into court—sustained an immediate defeat—and was successfully sued for damages by the victorious party. Add to this, his imprisonment for a libel, with his repeated expulsions from the House of Commons, and his finally defeating that body, and compelling them to erase the resolution from their journals—and his merits were so great, that not even the ugly concomitant of another conviction for a grossly obscene book, printed clandestinely at a private press, could countervail his political virtues. He became the prime favourite of the mob, and was even admitted by more rational patriots to have deserved well of the constitution, from the courage and skill which he had shown in fighting two severe battles, and gaining for it two important victories. The promotion which he had in vain sought in the purlieus of Whitehall, awaited him in the city; he became Alderman; he became Lord Mayor; and, having obtained the lucrative civic office of Chamberlain, which placed him for life in affluent circumstances, he retired, while in the prime of life, from a political warfare, of which he had accomplished all the purposes, by reaping its most precious fruits; passed the rest of his days in the support of the government; never raised his voice for reform, or for peace, or to mitigate the hostility of our court towards the country that had afforded him shelter in his banishment; nor ever quitted the standard of Mr. Pitt when it marshalled its followers to assaults on the constitution, compared with which all that he had ever even invented against Lord Bute, sank into mere insignificance.

That the folly of the government, concurring with the excited and sulky temper of the times, enabled Wilkes to drive so gainful a trade in patriotism, with so small a provision of the capital generally deemed necessary for embarking in it, there can be little doubt. In any ordinary circumstances, his speculation never could have succeeded. In most of the qualities required for it, he was exceedingly deficient. Though of good manners, and even of a winning address, his personal appearance was so revolting as to be hardly human. High birth he could not boast; for his father was a respectable distiller in Clerkenwell. Of fortune he had but a moderate share, and it was all spent before he became a candidate for popular favour; and

his circumstances were so notoriously desperate, that he lived for years like a mendicant on patriotic subscriptions. Those more sterling qualities of strict moral conduct, regular religious habits, temperate and prudent behaviour, sober industrious life—qualities which are generally required of public men, even if more superficial accomplishments should be dispensed with—he had absolutely nothing of; and the most flagrant violations of decency on moral as well as religious matters were committed, were known, were believed, and were overlooked by the multitude, in the person of their favourite champion, who yet had the address to turn against one of his antagonists, a clerical gentleman, some of those feelings of the English people in behalf of decorum, all of which his life was passed in openly outraging. Of the lighter but very important accomplishments which fill so prominent a place in the patriotic character, great eloquence, and a strong and masculine style in writing, he had but little. His compositions are more pointed than powerful; his wit shines far more than his passions glow; and as a speaker, when he did speak, which was but rarely, he showed indeed some address and much presence of mind, but no force, and produced hardly any effect. Horace Walpole constantly describes him as devoid of all power of speaking. Of his readiness, an anecdote is preserved which may be worth relating. Mr. Luttrell and he were standing on the Brentford hustings, when he asked his adversary privately, whether he thought there were more fools or rogues among the multitude of Wilkites spread out before them. “I’ll tell them what you say, and put an end to you,” said the Colonel; but perceiving the threat gave Wilkes no alarm, he added, “Surely you don’t mean to say you could stand here one hour after I did so?”—“Why,” the answer was, “*you* would not be alive one instant after.”—“How so?”—“I should merely say it was a fabrication, and they would destroy you in the twinkling of an eye!”

If we are to judge of his speaking by the very few samples preserved of it, we should indeed form a very humble estimate of its merits. Constant declamation about rights, and liberties. and tyrants, and corruption, with hardly the merit of the most ordinary commonplaces on these hackneyed topics, seem to fill up its measure—with neither fact, nor argument, nor point, nor any thing at all happy or new in the handling of the threadbare material. But what it wanted in force it probably made up in fury; and, as calling names is an easy work to do the enraged multitude as easily are pleased with what suits their excited feelings, gratifying the craving for more stimulus which excitement produces. That he failed, and signally failed, whenever he was called upon to address an audience which rejects such matter, is very certain.¹ In Parliament he was seldom or never heard after his own case had ceased to occupy the

¹ “He has so little quickness, or talent for public speaking, that he would not be heard with patience.”—(*Letters to Sir H. Mann*, li. 22.)

public attention; and nothing can be worse than his address to the Court of Common Pleas when he was discharged. The occasion, too, on which he failed was a great one, when a victory for constitutional principle had been gained perhaps by him—certainly in his person. All the people of London were hanging on the lips of their leader; yet nothing could be worse or feebler than his speech, of which the burden was a topic as much out of place as possible in a court of justice, where the strict letter of the law had alone prevailed, and that topic was verily handled with miserable inefficiency. “Liberty, my lords, liberty has been the object of my life! Liberty”—and so forth. He might about as well have sung a song, or lifted his hat and given three cheers.

In his writings, especially his dedication to Lord Bute of “Roger Mortimer,” a tragedy, his notes on Warburton, and his ironical criticism on the Speaker’s reprimand to the Printers, we trace much of that power of wit and of humour which he possessed to an extraordinary degree in private society. The last of these three pieces is by far the best, though he himself greatly preferred the first. It must be allowed, however, that neither is very original; and that both might easily enough have occurred to a diligent reader of Swift, Addison, Arbuthnot, and of Bolingbroke’s dedication to Walpole, under the name of D’Anvers—a very superior production in all respects to the dedication of Roger Mortimer.

Of his convivial wit no doubt can remain. Gibbon, who passed an evening with him in 1762, when both were militia officers, says, “I scarcely ever met with a better companion; he has inexhaustible spirits, infinite wit and humour, and a great deal of knowledge;” he adds, “a thorough profligate in principle as in practice; his life stained with every vice, and his conversation full of blasphemy and indecency; these morals he glories in; for shame is a weakness he has long since surmounted.” This, no doubt, is greatly exaggerated, and the historian, believing him really to confess his political profligacy, is perhaps in error also,—“He told us that in this time of public dissension he was resolved to make his fortune.” Possibly this was little more than a variety of his well-known saying to some one who was fawning on him with extreme doctrines—“I hope you don’t take me for a Wilkite.”

Of his wit and drollery some passages are preserved in society; but of these not many can with propriety be cited. We doubt if his retort to Lord Sandwich be of this description, when being asked, coarsely enough, “Whether he thought he should die by a halter or by a certain disease?” he quickly said, “That depends on whether I embrace your Lordship’s principles or your mistress.” We give this, in order to contradict the French anecdote, which ascribes the *mot* to Mirabeau as a retort to Cardinal Maury, while sitting by him in the National Assembly. I heard it myself from the Duke of Norfolk who was present when the dialogue took place,

many years before the French Revolution. His exclamation, powerfully humorous certainly, on Lord Thurlow's solemn hypocrisy in the House of Lords, is well known. When that consummate piece of cant was performed with all the solemnity which the actor's incredible air, eyebrows, voice, could lend the imprecation, "If I forget my sovereign, may my God forget me!"—Wilkes, seated on the steps of the throne, eyeing him askance with his inhuman squint and demoniac grin, muttered, "Forget you! He'll see you d——d first."

One quality remains to be added, but that a high one, and for a demagogue essential. He was a courageous man. Neither politically nor personally did he know what fear was. Into no risks for his party did he ever hesitate to rush. From no danger, individually, was he ever known to shrink. The meeting which he gave Secretary Martin, and which nearly cost him his life, was altogether unnecessary; he might easily have avoided it; and when a wild young Scotch officer asked satisfaction for something said against his country, he met no refusal of his absurd demand; but was ordered on a distant service before he could repair to Flanders, whither Wilkes went to fight him, after the Mareschal's Court of France had interdicted a meeting in that country.

Some of the other honourable feelings which are usually found in company with bravery, seem generally to have belonged to him. He was a man, apparently, of his word. In his necessities, though he submitted to eleemosynary aid for pecuniary supplies, and maltreated his wife to relieve his embarrassments, he yet had virtue enough to avoid the many disreputable expedients which have made the condition of the needy be compared to the impossibility of keeping an empty sack upright. His worst offence, and that which brings his honesty into greatest discredit, is certainly the playing a game in political virtue, or driving a commerce of patriotism, which the reader of his story is constantly struck with; and in no instance does this appear more plainly than in such attempts at pandering to the passions of the people, as his addressing a canting letter to the Lord Mayor, when refusing, as Sheriff of London, to attend the procession to St. Paul's on the occasion of the King's accession. He grounds his refusal on the preference he gives to "the real administration of justice, and his unwillingness to celebrate the accession of a prince, under whose inauspicious reign the Constitution has been grossly and deliberately violated." That this was a measure to catch mob applause, is proved by his sending a draft of his epistle to Junius for his opinion, and in his note, inclosing the paper, he calls it a "manœuvre."¹—(WOODFALL'S *Junius*, i. 324.)

I have dwelt longer upon this celebrated, rather let me say noted

¹ In admitting the polished manners of Wilkes, and that he had lived much in good society, somewhat in the best, we need not admit that his turn of mind was not in some sort vulgar—witness his letters to Junius throughout—particularly the

person, than may seem to be in proportion or keeping with a representation of the group in which he figures; because it is wholesome to contemplate the nature, and reflect upon the fate, of one beyond all others of his day, the idol of the mob, the popular favourite; one who, by the force of their applause, kept so far a footing with the better part of society as to be very little blamed, very cautiously abjured, by those most filled with disgust and with detestation of his practices. It is an addition to the chapter on this subject, already suggested by the French revolution. The men in Parliament, the members of the popular party, with perhaps the single exception of Lord Chatham, while they would have viewed with utter scorn any approaches he might make to their intimacy, nevertheless were too much afraid of losing the countenance of the multitude he ruled over, to express their strongly entertained sentiments of his great demerits. They might not so far disgrace themselves as to truckle in their measures; they never certainly courted him with extending their patronage to himself or his accomplices; but they were under the powerful influence of intimidation, and were content to pass for his fellow-labourers in the Whig vineyard, and to suppress the feelings with which his conduct in public and private life filled them, rather than encounter his vengeance and risk the loss, the temporary loss, of mob applause. How base does such conduct now appear, and how noble is the contrast of Lord Chatham's manly deportment in the eyes of impartial posterity!

But the fall, the rapid and total declension, of Wilkes's fame—the utter oblivion into which his very name has passed for all purposes save the remembrance of his vices—the very ruins of his reputation no longer existing in our political history—this affords also a salutary lesson to the followers of the multitude,—those who may court the applause of the hour, and regulate their conduct towards the people, not by their own sound and conscientious opinions of what is right, but by the desire to gain fame in doing what is pleasing, and to avoid giving the displeasure that arises from telling

papers wherein he describes Junius's private communications to him as '*stirring up his spirits like a kiss from Chloe*,' and asks the 'great unknown' to accept of what? Books? Valuable MSS.? Interesting information? No—but tickets to the Lord Mayor's dinner—crowded dinner—and the Lady Mayoress's far less tolerable ball, with a hint 'to bring his Junia, if there be one.'—WOODFALL, l. 325.

When, in 1817, I stated my strong opinion in the House of Commons on Wilkes's character, and the shame that his popularity brought on the people of England for a time, Mr. Wilberforce expressed his thanks to me and confirmed my statements. Mr. Canning, however, observed that Wilkes was by no means a singular instance of demagogues not being respectable, and added,

He's Knight o' th' shire, and represents them all,

which is an exaggerated view certainly. Sir Philip Francis, the morning after, remonstrated strongly with me, in the company of other friends, for saying anything in disparagement of a man run down by the Court. He regarded the offence as greatly aggravated by the praise which had been given to Lord Mansfield, against whom he inveighed bitterly. This tone, so precisely that of Junius upon both subjects, was much remarked at the time.

wholesome though unpalatable truths. Never man more pandered to the appetites of the mob than Wilkes; never political pimp gave more uniform contentment to his employers. Having the moral and sturdy English, and not the voluble and versatile Irish, to deal with, he durst not do or say as he chose himself; but was compelled to follow that he might seem to lead, or at least to go two steps with his followers that he might get them to go three with him. He dared not deceive them grossly, clumsily, openly, impudently — dared not tell them opposite stories in the same breath — give them one advice to-day and the contrary to-morrow — pledge himself to a dozen things at one and the same time; then come before them with every one pledge unredeemed, and ask their voices, and ask their money too on the credit of as many more pledges for the succeeding half year — all this with the obstinate and jealous people of England was out of the question; it could not have passed for six weeks. But he committed as great, if not as gross, frauds upon them; abused their confidence as entirely if not so shamefully; catered for their depraved appetites in all the base dainties of sedition, and slander, and thoughtless violence, and unreasonable demands; instead of using his influence to guide their judgment, improve their taste, reclaim them from bad courses, and better their condition by providing for their instruction. The means by which he retained their attachment were disgraceful and vile. Like the hypocrite, his whole public life was a lie. The tribute which his unruly appetites kept him from paying to private morals, his dread of the mob, or his desire to use them for his selfish purposes, made him yield to public virtue; and he never appeared before the world without the mask of patriotic enthusiasm or democratic fury; — he who in the recesses of Medenham Abbey, and before many witnesses, gave the Eucharist to an ape, or prostituted the printing-press to multiply copies of a production that would dye with blushes the cheek of an impure.

It is the abuse, no doubt, of such popular courses, that we should reprobate. Popularity is far from being contemptible; it is often an honourable acquisition; when duly earned, always a test of good done or evil resisted. But to be of a pure and genuine kind, it must have one stamp — the security of one safe and certain die; it must be the popularity that follows good actions, not that which is run after. Nor can we do a greater service to the people themselves, or read a more wholesome lesson to the race, above all, of rising statesmen, than to mark how much the mock-patriot, the mob-seeker, the parasite of the giddy multitude, falls into the very worst faults for which popular men are wont the most loudly to condemn, and most heartily to despise, the courtly fawners upon princes. Flattery indeed! obsequiousness! time-serving! What courtier of them all ever took more pains to soothe an irritable or to please a capricious prince than Wilkes to assuage the anger or gain the favour by humouring the prejudices of the mob! Falsehood, truly!

intrigue! manœuvre! Where did ever titled suitor for promotion lay his plots more cunningly, or spread more wide his net, or plant more pensively in the fire those irons by which the waiters upon royal bounty forge to themselves and to their country chains, that they may also make the ladder they are to mount by, than the patriot of the city did to delude the multitude, whose slave he made himself, that he might be rewarded with their sweet voices, and so rise to wealth and to power? When he penned the letter of cant about administering justice, rather than join in a procession to honour the accession of a prince whom in a private petition he covered over thick and threefold with the slime of his flattery, he called it himself a "manœuvre." When he delivered a rant about liberty before the reverend judges of the land — the speaking law of the land — he knew full well that he was not delighting those he addressed, but the mob out of doors, on whose ears the trash was to be echoed back. When he spoke a speech in Parliament of which no one heard a word, and said aside to a friend who urged the fruitlessness of the attempt at making the House listen — "Speak it I must, for it has been printed in the newspapers this half-hour" — he confessed that he was acting a false part in one place to compass a real object in another; — as thoroughly as ever minister did when he affected by smiles to be well in his prince's good graces before the multitude, all the while knowing that he was receiving a royal rebuke. When he and one confederate in the private room of a tavern issued a declaration, beginning, "We, the people of England," and signed "by order of the meeting," — he practised as gross a fraud upon that people as ever peer or parasite did, when affecting to pine for the prince's smiles, and to be devoted to his pleasure, in all the life they led consecrated to the furtherance of their own. It is no object of mine to exalt courtly arts, or undervalue popular courses; no wish have I to over-estimate the claims of aristocracy at the cost of lowering the people. Both departments of our mixed social structure demand equally our regard; but let the claims of both be put on their proper footing. We may say, and very sincerely say, with Cicero — "*Omnes boni semper nobilitati favemus, et quia utile est reipublicæ nobiles homines esse dignos majoribus suis; et quia valet, apud nos, clarorum hominum et bene de republica meritorum memoria, etiam mortuorum.*" (*Pro Sext.*) These are the uses, and these the merits of the aristocratic branch of our system; while the mean arts of the courtier only degrade the patrician character. But mean as they are, their vileness does not exceed that of the like arts practised towards the multitude; nor is the Sovereign Prince whose ear the flatterers essay to tickle that they may deceive him for their own purposes, more entirely injured by the deception which withholds the truth, than the Sovereign People is betrayed and undone by those who, for their own vile ends, pass their lives in suppressing wholesome truth, and propagating popular delusion.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH.

It would not be easy to find a greater contrast between two individuals filling places of the same kind, than the great judge whose character we have been contemplating afforded to one of the most eminent that have flourished in later times, Lord Ellenborough. In some respects, indeed, he presented a contrast to all other judges; for he broke through most of the conventional trammels which those high functionaries generally impose upon themselves. Far from abounding in that cautious circumspection, that close adherence to technical proprieties, that restraint of his mind to the mere matter in hand, he despised even much of what goes to form ordinary discretion; and is so much overrated by inferior natures as the essence of wisdom, but so justly valued by calculating ones as the guarantee of success. Of compromise, whether regarding his opinions or his wishes, he knew not the meaning; of fear, in any of its various and extensive provinces, he knew not even the name; or, if he saw its form, yet he denied its title, held its style in mockery, and would not, even for an instant, acknowledge its sway. Far, indeed, from cradling himself within the details of a subject, he was wholly averse to such narrow views of particulars; and took a large and commanding survey of the whole, which laid open before him all its parts and all their relations. Bred a pleader, he, however, on coming to the bar, early showed that he only retained the needful technical knowledge which this preparatory practice had bestowed on him; and he at once dashed into the leading branch of the profession. The famous case of Mr. Hastings—the opprobrium of English justice, and, through mismanagement and party violence, the destruction of the greatest remedy afforded by our constitution,—soon opened to Mr. Law the highest walks of the bar. He was the defendant's leading counsel; and his talents, both as a lawyer and a speaker, shone forth conspicuous even upon that great occasion of oratorical display;—the only fruits produced by this proceeding, so costly to the country, so much more costly still to the free constitution of England. He soon rose to the unrivalled lead of the Northern Circuit, to which, by birth, he belonged; his father being Bishop of Carlisle, and himself born at the village of Salkeld,¹ in Cumberland. In Westminster Hall he had also

¹ This village is now remarkable as the residence of Mr. Gaskin, a man of the most sterling merit as an astronomer and maker of exquisite telescopes; father of the tutor of Jesus College, Cambridge, so well known for his mathematical accomplishments.

good success, though he never rose there into the first lead ; having indeed to contend with most able rivals, and among them with Erskine, the greatest advocate of all. Lord Kenyon, whose favour for this illustrious ornament of his court I have already had occasion to remark, was supposed, or was felt by Mr. Law, to be partial more than became him to this formidable antagonist ; and a quotation to which this feeling gave rise, is often cited, and justly, as singularly happy. Mr. Erskine had been, somewhat more than was his practice with any adversary, triumphing over him, when Mr. Law, first addressing him and then Lord Kenyon, thundered forth these fine, and expressive, and singularly applicable lines, with the volume of tone which he possessed beyond most men—

—Non me tua servida terrent
Dicta, ferox ; Di me terrent et Jupiter hostis.

Here he bowed sarcastically to the Chief-Justice, while he dwelt and paused upon the name of the heavenly archetype.

As a lawyer, without being very profound, and confining his learning to the ordinary matters of common law, he yet knew quite enough for ordinary occasions ; and afterwards, as generally happens with able men, greatly extended his information when raised to the bench. As an advocate, he was vigorous, impressive, adventurous ; more daring than skilful ; often, from his boldness, not a safe leader ; always despising the slow progress, the indirect avenues to victory, which the rules of art prescribe ;—always preferring to vault over obstacles, follow the shortest line, and cut the knot rather than waste time in untying it. But he could powerfully address the feelings, whether to rouse indignation at cruelty, or contempt at fraud, or scorn at meanness. For his own nature had nothing harsh in it, except his irascible temper, quickly roused, as quickly appeased ; his mind was just, abhorring any deviation from equity ; his nature was noble, holding in utter contempt everything low or base ; his spirit was open, manly, honest, and ever moved with disgust at anything false or tricky ; his courage was high, leaving him more scorn than compassion for nerves less firm than his own. Nor was it only the thunder of his fierce declamation—very effectual, though somewhat clumsy, and occasionally coarse—with which he could prevail against an adversary, and master an audience. He had no mean power of ridicule, as playful as a mind more strong than refined could make it ; while of sarcasm he was an eminent professor, but of the kind which hacks, and tears, and flays its victims, rather than destroys by cutting keenly. His vigorous understanding, holding no fellowship with anything that was petty or paltry, naturally saw the contemptible or inconsistent, and therefore in this wise ludicrous aspect of things ; nor did he apply any restraint on this property of his nature when he came into stations where it could less freely be indulged. His interrogative exclamation in Lord

Melville's case, when the party's ignorance of having taken accommodation out of the public fund was alleged—indeed, was proved—may be remembered as very picturesque, though perhaps more pungent than dignified. "Not know money? Did he see it when it glittered? Did he hear it when it chinked?" On the bench he had the very well known, but not very eloquent Henry Hunt before him, who, in mitigation of an expected sentence, spoke of some who "complained of his dangerous eloquence"—"They do you great injustice, sir," said the considerate and merciful Chief-Justice, kindly wanting to relieve him from all anxiety on this charge. After he had been listening to two conveyancers for a whole day of a long and most technical argument, in silence and with a wholesome fear of lengthening it by any interruption whatever, one of them in reply to a remark from another judge said, "If it is the pleasure of your lordship that I should go into that matter"—"We, sir," said the Chief-Justice, "have no pleasure in it any way." When a favourite special pleader was making an excursion, somewhat unexpected by his hearers, as unwonted in him, into a pathetic topic—"An'twe, sir, rather getting now into the high sentimental latitudes?"

It was observed with some justice, that his periods occasionally, with his manner, reminded men of Johnson. When meeting the defence of an advocate for a libel on the Prince Regent, that it had been provoked by the gross, and fulsome, and silly flattery of some corrupt panegyrist—"What," said he, "an offence against the law of land provoked by an offence against the laws of taste! How frail is the tenure by which men hold their reputation, if it may be worn down and compromised away between the mischievous flattery of fulsome praise, and the open enmity of malignant abuse!" But it was observed with much less correctness that his sarcasms derived adventitious force from his Cumberland dialect. From his manner and voice, both powerful, both eminently characteristic, they assuredly did derive a considerable and a legitimate accession of effect. But his dialect was of little or no avail; indeed, except in the pronouncing of a few words, his solecisms were not perceivable. It was a great mistake to suppose that such pronunciations as *Marchant*, *Hartford*, were provincial; they are old English, and came from a time when the spelling was as we have now written the words. He was of those, too, who said "*Lunnun*" and "*Brummagem*;" but this, too, is the good old English dialect, and was always used by Mr. Perceval, who never crossed the Trent except twice a-year going the Midland Circuit. Mr. Fox, a lover of the Saxon dialect, in like manner, always so spoke; and preferred *Cales*, and *Sheer*, and *Groyne*, to *Cadiz*, *Shire*, and *Corunna*.

When his powerful mind was brought to bear upon any question that came before him, whether sitting alone at *Nisi Prius*, or with his brethren in *Banc*, the impression which he made upon it was immediate, sure, and deep. Sometimes it required the modification

of the whole court revising what he had done alone; sometimes the interposition of his fellows sitting with him; but its value was always great, and no man doubted the energy or could avoid feeling the weight of his blows.

The Books are perhaps not the only quarters whither we should resort to find the memorials of a Chief-Judge's learning or talents for transacting judicial business. All that relates to sittings and circuits—that is, nearly two-thirds of his judicial labours, and by far the most important portion of them—leaves no trace whatever in these valuable Repertories of legal learning. Yet the Term Reports bear ample testimony to the vigour of this eminent individual's capacity, during the eighteen years that he filled the first place among the English Common Law judges.

His manner has been already mentioned in one particular. It was much more faulty in another. He was somewhat irascible, and occasionally even violent. But no one could accuse him of the least partiality; his honest and manly nature ever disdained as much to trample overbearingly on the humble, as to crouch meanly before the powerful. He was sometimes impatient; and, as his mind was rather strong than nimble, he often betrayed hastiness of conclusion more than he displayed quickness of apprehension. This slowness was shown by his actually writing his speeches for many years after he was a leader; and, to the end of his professional life, he would occasionally commit to paper portions even of his intended reply to the Jury. It was a consequence of this power of his understanding, and of his uniform preference of the plain, sound, common-sense views which vigorous minds prefer, that refinements or subtleties were almost as little to his liking, as to the taste of his more cold and cautious successor. But he was not so much disturbed with them. They gave him little vexation, but rather contributed to his mirth, or furnished fuel for his sarcastic commentary. "It was reserved," said he, respecting a somewhat refined and quite a new gloss upon a well-known matter—"It was reserved for the ingenuity of the fiftieth of Geo. III. [he was speaking in the year 1810] to hit upon this crotchet."

To give any samples of this eminent person's eloquence when at the bar would not be very easy, because in his time the practice had not been introduced of publishing corrected reports of ordinary trials; and till the speeches of Mr. Curran and Lord Erskine were collected in very recent times, no such works had ever been given to the public, at least in this country. But I have been so fortunate as to obtain the short-hand writer's notes of Mr. Law's celebrated Defence of Hastings; and a careful perusal of it has fully satisfied me that its merits fully answer its reputation, and that his great forensic powers have not been overrated by the general opinion of Westminster Hall. There is a lucid order in the statement of his details, struggling as he did with the vast compass and repulsive materials

of his subject, and a plain, manly vigour in the argument, far more valuable to his cause than any rhetorical display. But there is also much of the purest and most effective eloquence. The topics and the illustrations are felicitously chosen; the occasional figures are chastely but luminously introduced; the diction is pure and nervous, marked by the love of strong and homely phrase which was breathed in his discourse; the finer passages have rarely been surpassed by any effort of forensic power, must have produced a great effect under all the disadvantages of an exhausted auditory and a worn-out controversy, and would have ranked with the most successful exhibitions of the oratorical art had they been delivered in the early stage of the trial, before all had become, for the reasons so skilfully stated in the exordium, flat and lifeless. The following two passages will serve to justify my opinion. The first is a portion of the beautifully and skilfully elaborated exordium; the second is a part of the peroration, and may fairly be set in comparison with Mr. Burke's celebrated panegyric on Mr. Fox:—

“To a taste thus pampered, and I had almost said corrupted, with such luscious delicacies, we have nothing left that we can offer but the plain and simple food, I had almost said the dry husk, of fact and argument.

“But, my lords, we have, on another account, reason to anticipate the dissatisfaction and disgust of your lordships. Not only the manner in which this subject will be treated must be more homely than that to which you have been hitherto accustomed, but the subject itself and every attendant circumstance has lost the attractive grace and keen relish of novelty. This solemn scene, the concentrated splendour of everything that is dignified and illustrious in the various orders of this well compacted community,—the dazzling display of the envied and valuable distinctions with which the wisdom of our country has at all times adorned high birth, eminent virtue, brilliant valour, profound learning,—everything, in short, which is precious and sacred in the display of the supreme administration of British justice,—has, by the frequency of its exhibition, lost much of that claim to eager attention and warm interest which it once advanced, much of that favour which it lent to the first efforts of those whose great faculties little needed such adventitious aid to arrest the attention of the world.

“My lords, the province which our duty assigns us is, on other accounts, equally irksome and disadvantageous. To detect brilliant fallacies, to unveil specious errors, is at all times a thankless, obnoxious, and uninteresting office. To dispel the clouds of misrepresentation which have been for so many years gathering over the public life and conduct of the gentleman at your bar within that contracted portion of time which the public patience, and, what at our hands is equally deserving of consideration, the tortured and almost expiring patience of our client, will allow us, is hardly

within the compass of the same talents which have imposed this burden on us, but beyond the reach of all reasonable hope with those meaner faculties on which this Herculean labour rests. Struggling, therefore, against so many natural and so many artificial difficulties, enhanced by the inevitable effect at once of anticipation and of fatigue, where can the advocate look for comfort, or from whence derive any reasonable source of hope?"

The following is taken from the peroration :—

"My lords, I last of all present you with that praise which shall embalm his memory when he shall be no more, and whilst he lives shall enable him to look down with indifference and with scorn upon the most malignant efforts of his bitterest enemies. The people of India in this respect well adopted the practice of the ancients in delaying their sacrifices to heroes till after sunset. They waited not only till the beams which had warmed and cherished them were withdrawn, but they waited till the object of their regard had well nigh set in dark clouds of disastrous night : they waited till it was told, to the grief and astonishment of their distant land, that the beneficent author of so much good to them was arraigned by his countrymen as the cause of their oppression, vexation, degradation, and disgrace. Roused by these sad tidings, the rude but grateful being who had been called by Mr. Hastings from the hills and forests of Rajawaum to abandon the abode of savage life and to taste the comforts of civilised existence,—the pilgrim who had been protected in his annual visits to the hallowed shrine where his forefathers had worshipped,—the princes who had been raised up, established, and protected by his power,—the humble citizen to whom he had communicated the invaluable blessings of a regular administration of impartial and enlightened justice,—each, as he was severally blessed, and each according to his several ritual, invoked the sacred object of his faith and fear in solemn attestation of his thankfulness for that beneficent administration which, under the providence of our common Father, had been the appointed means of drawing down so many blessings on their heads."

It is not possible to quit this subject without once more expressing the sense now generally entertained by all impartial men of the gross and cruel injustice which marked the whole conduct of this celebrated impeachment. A powerful party, powerful in the Commons, the accusers, as well as among the Peers, the judges, made the destruction of an eminent public servant, admitted on all hands to have conferred the greatest benefits on his country, and crowned with unvaried approval by his employers, the object of their utmost efforts, taking it up distinctly as a party question. It would have been enough to stamp the proceeding with the character of foul injustice had only the accusers been bound together, excited and exasperated by this factious spirit ; because the accuser who pre-

fers criminal charges is bound to act with fairness and with candour towards the object of his attack, and to show that he is only actuated by a painful sense of public duty. But how much more foul a stain attaches to this mockery of British justice, when we find the judges themselves leagued on either side by the same factious propensities, so that each man's vote could as certainly be known before the close of the trial, nay before its commencement, as after he had solemnly laid his hand on his heart and pronounced judgment "upon his honour;" that the victim of these party manoeuvres was kept in the suspense of a culprit upon his trial for seven years; that he was during that time the object of incessant vituperation, either from the party chiefs in the Commons, or the party managers before the Lords, or the party writers in the press, or the party spouters at public meetings, and more commonly from all at once, assailing his devoted character; that all this invective was poured forth against him for many years before one word could be heard in his defence, half a generation passing away under the horror of his name, which such proceedings were calculated to inspire; that his fortune, his moderate fortune, should have been exhausted with his health, his spirits, his life, or whatever of these a long service under the eastern sun had left unscathed; and that, finally, when men had forgotten all but the eloquence of his adversaries, and would not listen to another word on either side of the tedious question, he should in his old age be pronounced wholly guiltless and honourably acquitted, being ruined as if he had been condemned—these are the outrages upon all justice which this scandalous mockery of a trial presents! But it also exhibits another result of blind factious zeal and boundless personal vanity, not unalloyed with fanaticism. Owing to this proceeding it is that the appointed remedy for misgovernment in our constitution—the impeachment of public wrong-doers—has become so discredited, that it exists in little more than in the theory of the government; while, but for Lord Erskine's firm and judicious conduct of Lord Melville's case, it would hardly have been now mentioned even among the speculative possibilities of our political system.

The chief defect of Lord Ellenborough's judicial character, not unconnected with the hastiness of his temper, also bore some relation to the vigour of his understanding, which made him somewhat contemptuous of weaker men, and somewhat overweening in reliance upon himself. He was not sufficiently patient and passive, as a judge ought habitually to be. He was apt to overlook suggestions, which, though valuable, might be more feebly urged than suited his palate. He was fond of taking the case prematurely into his own hands. He dispatched business with great celerity, and, for the most part, with success. But causes were not sifted before him with that closeness of scrutiny, and parties were not suffered

to bring forward all they had to state with that fulness and freedom, which alone can prevent misdecision, and ensure the due administration of justice. There was a common saying in his time, which contrasts the Court of Chancery under Lord Eldon with the King's Bench under Lord Ellenborough,—“the two sides of Westminster Hall,” as the Equity and Law departments are technically called. The one was said to hear everything and decide nothing, the other to decide everything and hear nothing. But in Banc, where full time has been given for preparation, where the court never can be taken by surprise, where, moreover, the assistance of three puisne judges is ever at hand to remedy the chief's defects and control his impatience, this hasty disposition and warm temperament was comparatively harmless, and seldom produced mischievous effects to the suitor. At Nisi Prius it is far otherwise; for there a false step is easily made, and it may not be easily retraced. If the judge's power have prevented a moderately experienced practitioner from taking an objection in due time, or from urging it with sufficient distinctness, his client may often be told that he is too late, when he seeks to be restored against the consequences of this mishap. So when a verdict has been obtained against the justice of the case, and the judge, through the impatience of his nature, has not disapproved it, the injury is remediless, because a new trial will in most instances be refused, or if granted, can only be obtained by the payment of all costs. There can be no manner of doubt, I apprehend, that taking into the account the defect now mentioned, Lord Tenterden was upon the whole a better judge than his abler and more vigorous predecessor. But it is also clear that he did not as vigorously dispatch the business of the sittings before him.

The state, however, of the bar, and the distribution of business in Lord Ellenborough's time, made it much easier for him to give that dispatch. Had he survived to later times, it may well be questioned if he could have proceeded with the same celerity which marked his reign. The suitors as well as the bar were no longer the same body, with whose interests and with whose advocacy he had to deal. In his time, the whole City business was in the hands of Gibbs, Garrow, and Park; with occasionally, as in the cases of the Baltic risks, the intervention of Topping;¹ and it was a main object with them all to facilitate the dispatch of business. This

¹ The mention of this most honourable man, in connexion with those cases, recalls an incident so creditable to himself, and to the renowned profession to which he belonged, that it ought not to be passed over in silence. A general retainer of a thousand guineas was brought to him, to cover the Baltic cases then in progress. His answer was, that this indicated either a doubt of his doing his duty on the ordinary terms known in the profession (one guinea particular, and five guineas general retainer), or an expectation that he should, on being thus retained, do something beyond the line of his duty, and therefore he must decline it. His clerk then accepted of the usual sum of five guineas, and he led on those important cases for the defendants,

they effected by at once giving up all but the arguable points of law, on which they immediately took the judge's opinion ; and the maintainable questions of fact, on which they went to the jury. Fifteen or twenty important causes were thus disposed of in a morning, more to the satisfaction of the court and the benefit of the counsel than to the contentment of the parties or their attorneys. It is true that no real loss was, in the vast majority of instances, sustained by any one through this kind of arrangement, while the time of the public was saved. But it is equally true that every now and then a slip was made and a benefit lost ; and that nothing can guard against such accidents but the right course of thoroughly sifting each case, as if it were the only one in which the advocate was retained, or which the judge had to try. Nor must it be forgotten that the right decision of causes is only one, though certainly the most important, office of justice. Another, only second in importance to that, is the giving parties satisfaction,—such satisfaction as is enough for reasonable persons. Now, as every person is impressed with the idea that there is but one cause in the world, and that his own, however unmindful of this the court and the counsel may be, discontent, heart-burnings, feelings of injustice suffered, desire of redress in other ways, and among these, oftentimes by means of other suits, is sure to be left in the train of Themis, when the pace she moves at is too rapid for ordinary eyes to follow, and breaks too rudely through the surrounding ties and feelings of interest. Hence, the dispatch effected is frequently more apparent than real ; of which a remarkable example used to be afforded by Sir John Leach, whose swift decisions, without hearing, only produced appeals to the Great Seal. But in whatever way these opinions may be disposed of, one thing was certain ;—the kind of arrangement which has been described as prevailing among the leaders in Lord Ellenborough's time could only be found practicable as long as the lead should be confined within a very few hands. When it was at all scattered, such a thing was altogether out of the question ; and in Lord Tenterden's time this distribution undeniably took place.

But another change was also consummated, which, under Lord Tenterden's predecessor, had only begun to operate, and it tended materially both to control the speed of the bench, to promote the interest of the suitor, and to improve the administration of justice. The bar no longer owned so entire a supremacy of the bench ; the advocate was not any more placed at an immeasurable distance from the judge ; there was not now that impassable gulf between them, which, formerly, had yawned before the barrister's eye. I remember being told by a learned sergeant, that at the table of Sergeant's-inn, where the judges meet their brethren of the coif to dine, the etiquette was, in those days, never to say a word after the Chief Justice, nor ever to begin any topic

of conversation: he was treated with fully more than the obsequious deference shown at court to the sovereign himself. Assuredly, the footing upon which judges and barristers have been in recent times is as different as can well be conceived from that on which those high parties stood under Lord Ellenborough's administration of justice; and one consequence of the new regimen is the much greater fullness of discussion, with its attendant evil, no doubt, the much greater prolixity of counsel, and much slower progress of business.

In another particular Lord Ellenborough differed from his successor, and the diversity originated in the greater vigour of his faculties and his more entire confidence in himself. Lord Tenterden never having been a leader at the bar could not abide "the trick" of the profession, and no harm would have been done had he stopped here. But he seemed always to suppose that an address to a jury could be framed on the model of a special plea, or the counts in a declaration, only without the prolixity and repetition habitual with pleaders; and to forget that the surest way of bringing out the truth in any case is to let the conflicting feelings and interests of parties come into their natural collision. His impatience was thus very manifest; and had his nerves been in the same proportion firm as his dislike to declamation and illustration was strong, a struggle would have ensued in which the eloquence of the bar would either have been extinguished, or have silenced and discomfited the bench. In like manner, during the interlocutory discussions with the counsel, whether on motions in Banc, or on objections taken before him at *Nisi Prius*, he was uneasy, impatient, and indeed irascible, at nothing so much as at cases put by way of trying what the court had flung out. Being wholly void of imagination to supply cases in reply, and even without much quickness to sift the application of those put, he often lost his temper, and always treated the topic as an offence. But it was chiefly in obstructing cross-examination, which he wholly undervalued, from his utter incapability of performing his part in it, that his pleader-like habits broke out. Had he been submitted to in this matter, cross-examination would have been only known as a matter of legal history. His constant course was to stop the counsel, by reminding him that the witness had already said so, or had already sworn the contrary, and this before the question was answered; to which it was natural, and indeed became usual, for the counsel to make answer, that this was the very reason why the question had been asked; the object being either to try the witness's memory or to test his honesty.

Very far otherwise was Lord Ellenborough. He had long and ably led while an advocate, although he never attained the first rank in Westminster Hall, and only shone superior on the

Great Circuit of the North. He had therefore a fellow feeling with the leaders before him; and as for any dread of their address to the jury, or of any jealousy of the jury's interference with his functions, or any squeamish notion of his own dignity suffering from the address to the jury going on before him, or any disinclination to witness the utmost exertion of the advocate's eloquence or wit in speaking, or of his subtly and vehemence in cross-examination, there was no more risk of that than if he had not been present in the court. So when an objection was taken to evidence, he never attempted to escape from it by denying the materiality of the fact offered to be proved, or of the question attempted to be put. He at once gave his opinion, to which, and justly, he deemed the parties entitled. Beyond interfering to oppose a prolix and needless statement, or a wearisome and reiterative cross-examination, or a wandering from what he deemed the point in issue, he did not interfere; and the same liberty and even licence which he had himself enjoyed when dealing with witnesses, he freely allowed counsel to use in his presence.

While representing this contrast between the two Chief Justices, we must, in fairness to Lord Tenterden, bear in mind the somewhat anomalous position of a judge while presiding at *Nisi Prius*; a position, the annoyance of which so vigorous a personage as Lord Ellenborough had no occasion to heed, strong in his own resources, relying on his intrinsic qualities, seeking no support to his dignity from any adventitious circumstances, dreading no rival authority to lower it. But inferior men could not so easily bear that rivalry. The judge, indeed, presides over the whole proceedings; but the jury holds *divisum imperium*; and he sits there as the nominal chief while the advocate is sometimes dealing with the witness as if no judge were present, and sometimes addressing the jury, careless whether the judge hears him or not, equally indifferent whether his lordship approves or disapproves what he says. Princes, it is said, cannot allow any one to address another in their awful presence; nay, the code of etiquette has embodied this feeling of sensitive royalty in a rule or maxim. The ruler of the court has as little love of a proceeding which, in the prefatory words, "May it please your lordship," seems to recognise his supremacy; but in the next breath leaves "his lordship" entirely out of view, as if he were reposing in his bed, or gathered to his fathers. Few judges, accordingly, were so considerate as to be patient of eloquence, whether in declamation or in witty illustration; few regarded these flights otherwise than as in derogation from the respect which is their own especial due. To address passions which they are forbidden to feel—to contemplate topics that must be suited to any palate rather than theirs—to issue jokes by which they ought not to be moved while all others are convulsed—seemed incompatible with their station as the presiding power, or a violation of that respect which it ought to

inspire. Lord Tenterden, more than most judges, appeared to feel this; and it was a feeling wholly founded in forgetfulness of the very nature of jury trial, as it was unworthy of his solid sense and great sagacity. In the distribution of criminal justice the case is widely different. The anxiety necessarily attendant upon the judge's highly responsible office here leads him to court all help from the ingenuity of counsel. Before addressing the jury was allowed in cases of felony, the chances of collision were of course more limited; but even now nothing of the uneasy feeling to which I have been adverting has been found to take place since the recent change of the practice in criminal courts.

In his political opinions, Lord Ellenborough was originally, like the rest of his family, a moderate Whig. But he never mingled in the associations or proceedings of party; and held an independent course, with, however, considerable disinclination, at all times, to the policy and the person of Mr. Pitt. He joined Mr. Addington's Administration as Attorney-General, and came into Parliament, where he did not distinguish himself. Lord Kenyon's death soon after made way for him on the bench; and he was, at the same time, raised to the peerage. The quarrel between that administration and Mr. Pitt did not reconcile him to the minister; and against Lord Melville he entertained a strong personal as well as party prejudice, which broke out once and again during the proceedings on his impeachment. The accession of the Whigs to power, in 1806, was accompanied by their junction with Lord Sidmouth; and, as he required to have a friend in the strangely mixed cabinet, the unfortunate choice was made of the first Criminal and Common Law Judge in the land, of whom to make a political partisan;—he whose high office it was to try political offences of every description, and among others the daily libels upon the government of himself and his colleagues. This error has ever been deemed one of the darkest pages of Whig history. Mr. Fox made a dexterous and ingenious defence, quoting a few special precedents against the most sound principles of the constitution; and defending an inroad on the pure administration of criminal justice by appeals to instances of civilians and Chancery lawyers sitting in Parliament. But Lord Ellenborough's own son lately took occasion honestly to state that his father had told him, if it were to do over again, he should be no party to such a proceeding. He said this in the course of the discussion which I raised against making the Lord Chief Justice one of the Regency in the event of the next heir being beyond the seas on a demise of the crown. I may add, that being asked my opinion of his argument by Mr. Fox the day after Mr. Stanhope's motion, the reception which he gave my strong expression of dissent gave me a persuasion that he fully felt the difficulties of his case, if not its weakness.

On the bench, it is not to be denied that Lord Ellenborough oc-

casionally suffered the strength of his political feelings to break forth, and to influence the tone and temper of his observations. That he ever, upon any one occasion, knowingly deviated one hair's breadth from justice in the discharge of his office, is wholly untrue. The case which gave rise to the greatest comment, and even led to a senseless show of impeachment, was Lord Cochrane's; but I have the best reason to know that all who assisted at this trial were in truth convinced of the purity with which the judicial duties were discharged, and the equality with which justice was administered. Lord Ellenborough was not of those judges who, in directing the jury, merely read over their notes and let them guess at the opinions they have formed; leaving them without any help or recommendation to form their own judgments. Upon each case that came before him he had an opinion; and while he left the decision with the jury, he intimated how he thought himself. This manner of performing the office of judge is now generally followed and most commonly approved. It was the course taken by this great judge in trying Lord Cochrane and his alleged associates; but, if any of those who attacked him for it had been present at the trial of the case which stood immediately before it or after it in the paper, he would have found Lord Ellenborough trying that case in the self-same way—it being an action upon a bill of exchange or for goods sold and delivered.

I must, however, be here distinctly understood to deny the accuracy of the opinion which Lord Ellenborough appears to have formed in this case, and deeply to lament the verdict of guilty which the jury returned, after three hours' consulting and hesitation. If Lord Cochrane was at all aware of his uncle Mr. Cochrane Johnstone's proceedings, it was the whole extent of his privity to the fact. Having been one of the counsel engaged in the cause, I can speak with some confidence respecting it, and I take upon me to assert that Lord Cochrane's conviction was mainly owing to the extreme repugnance which he felt at giving up his uncle, or taking those precautions for his own safety which would have operated against that near relation. Even when he, the real criminal, had confessed his guilt by taking to flight, and the other defendants were brought up for judgment, we, the counsel, could not persuade Lord Cochrane to shake himself loose from the contamination by giving him up.

As regarded the Lord Chief Justice's conduct at the trial, none of us entertained any doubt that he had acted impartially, according to his conscience, and had tried it as he would have tried any other cause in which neither political nor personal feelings could have interfered. Our only complaint was his Lordship's refusal to adjourn after the prosecutor's case closed, and his requiring us to enter upon our defence at so late an hour, past nine o'clock, that the adjournment took place at midnight, and before we called our

witnesses. Of course I speak of the trial at Guildhall only. Lord Ellenborough was equally to blame with his brethren in the Court of King's Bench for that most cruel and unjustifiable sentence, which at once secured Lord Cochrane's re-election for Westminster when the Commons expelled him upon his conviction, and abolished for ever the punishment of the pillory, in all but one excepted case, perjury, in which also it has practically ceased to defile and disgrace our criminal jurisprudence.

In 1833, the government of which I was a member restored this great warrior to his rank of admiral in our navy. The country, therefore, in the event of hostilities, would now have the inestimable benefit of his services, whom none perhaps ever equalled in heroic courage, and whose fertility of resources, military as well as naval, place him high among the very first of commanders. That his honours of knighthood so gloriously won should still be withholden is a stain not upon him, but upon the councils of his country; and after his restoration to the service, it is as inconsistent and incomprehensible as cruel and unjust.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE BUSHE.

Although I had not the advantage of knowing this eminent person in his judicial capacity, yet I had the great pleasure of his acquaintance, and I also upon one remarkable occasion saw him examined as a witness upon matter partly of fact and partly of opinion; it was before the Irish committee of 1839. The testimony of a judge thus given bears a close resemblance to the opinion which he delivers in Court and the directions which he gives to a jury. Acting in both capacities under the obligation of his oath, and in pursuit of nothing but the truth, it becomes him to pronounce, with most scrupulous fairness, the opinions which he states, to relate with the utmost precision the facts which he knows, and to weigh nicely every word which he uses in conveying his statement. No one who heard the very remarkable examination of Chief Justice Bushe could avoid forming the most exalted estimate of his judicial talents. Many of the questions to which he necessarily addressed himself were involved in party controversy, exciting on one side and the other great heats; yet never was a more calm or a more fair tone than that which he took and throughout preserved. Some of the points were of great nicety; but the discrimination with which he handled them was such as seemed to remove all difficulty and dispel whatever obscurity clouded the subject. The choice of his words

was most felicitous ; it always seemed as if the form of expression was selected, which was the most peculiarly adapted to convey the meaning, with perfect simplicity and without the least matter of exaggeration or of softening. The manner of giving each sentence, too, betokened an anxiety to give the very truth, and the slowness oftentimes showed that each word was cautiously weighed. There was shed over the whole the grace of a delivery altogether singular for its combined suavity and dignity. All that one had heard of the wonderful fascination of his manner, both at the bar and upon the bench, became easily credible to those who heard his evidence.

If we followed him into the circle of private society, the gratification was exceedingly great. Nothing, indeed, could be more delightful ; for his conversation had no effort, not the least attempt at display, and the few moments that he spoke at a time all persons wished to have been indefinitely prolonged. There was a conciseness and point in his expressions which none who heard him could forget. The power of narrative which so greatly distinguished him at the bar was marvellously shown in his familiar conversation ; but the shortness, the condensation, formed perhaps the feature that took most hold of the hearer's memory. They who passed one of his evenings with him during that visit to London will not easily forget an instance of this matchless faculty, and, at the hazard of doing it injustice, I must endeavour here to preserve it. He was describing a Gascon who had sent him wine, which was destroyed at the Custom House fire in Dublin, and he contrived to comprise in a few sentences, to all appearance naturally and without effort, his narrative of the proceeding, with two documents, and the point.—“ He had sent me wine which was consumed in the Custom House fire, and he wrote to condole with me on the loss to the public and the arts, but especially on that of the wine, which, he said, he found was by law at the purchaser's risk. I answered, and offered as some consolation to him the assurance that by law it was at the risk of the seller.”—Some members of the Northern Circuit then present were reminded of a celebrated story which the late Mr. Baron Wood used to be called upon to relate, in exemplification of the singular conciseness, and, I may add, felicity, of his diction. ¹

But it is fit that we should turn to the merits of Chief Justice Bushe while in the earlier period of his life he filled a high station at the bar. His education had been classical, and he studied and practised the rhetorical art with great success in the Historical Society of Dublin University, an institution famous for having trained about the same time Lord Plunket to that almost unrivalled excellence which he early attained, and for having at a former period fostered and exer-

¹ It would be difficult to name any composition superior in this respect to the two Tracts of Mr. Baron Wood, on the Tithe Law and its defects. They were printed, but not published.

cised the genius of Grattan, and Flood, and all the eminent Irish orators. The proficiency of Bushe may be estimated from the impression which Mr. Grattan confessed that the young man had made upon him. Having been present at one of the debates in the scene of his former studies, and heard Bushe speak, his remark was, "that he spoke with the lips of an angel." Accordingly, upon being called to the bar in 1790, he soon rose to extensive practice, and this he owed as much to his nice discretion, to the tact and the quickness which forms a *Nisi Prius* advocate's most important qualification, as to his powers of speaking. Of law he had a sufficient provision without any remarkable store of learning; nor did he ever either at the bar or on the bench excel in the black letter of the profession.

But his merit as a speaker was of the highest description. His power of narration has not, perhaps, been equalled. If any one would see this in its greatest perfection, he has only to read the inimitable speech on the Trimbleston cause: the narrative of Livy himself does not surpass that great effort. Perfect simplicity, but united with elegance; a lucid arrangement and unbroken connexion of all the facts; the constant introduction of the most picturesque expressions, but never as ornaments; these, the great qualities of narration, accomplish its great end and purpose; they place the story and the scene before the hearer, or the reader, as if he witnessed the reality. It is unnecessary to add, that the temperate, and chaste, and even subdued tone of the whole is unvaried and unbroken; but such praise belongs to every part of this great speaker's oratory. Whether he declaims or argues, moves the feelings or resorts to ridicule and sarcasm, deals in persuasion or invective, he never is, for an instant, extravagant. We have not the condensed and vigorous demonstration of Plunket; we have not those marvellous figures, sparingly introduced, but whensoever used, of an application to the argument absolutely magical;¹ but we have an equal display of chastened abstinence, of absolute freedom from all the vices of the Irish school, with, perhaps, a more winning grace

¹ Let no one hastily suppose that this is an exaggerated description of Lord Plunket's extraordinary eloquence. Where shall be found such figures as those which follow—each raising a living image before the mind, yet each embodying not merely a principle, but the very argument in hand—each leaving that very argument literally translated into figure? The first relates to the Statutes of Limitation, or to prescriptive title:—"If Time destroys the evidence of title, the laws have wisely and humanely made length of possession a substitute for that which has been destroyed. He comes with his scythe in one hand to mow down the monuments of our rights; but in his other hand the lawgiver has placed an hour-glass, by which he metes out incessantly those portions of duration which render needless the evidence that he has swept away."

Explaining why he had now become a Reformer, when he had before opposed the question:—"Circumstances," said he, "are wholly changed; formerly Reform came to our door like a felon—a robber to be resisted. He now approaches like a creditor; you admit the justice of his demand, and only dispute the time and the instalments by which he shall be paid."

of diction; and all who have witnessed it agree in ascribing the greatest power to a manner that none could resist. The utmost that partial criticism could do to find a fault was to praise the suavity of the orator at the expense of his force. John Kemble described him as "the greatest actor off the stage;" but he forgot that so great an actor must also have stood highest among his Thespian brethren had the scene been shifted.

In 1798 he came into Parliament. The great struggle of the Union was then beginning; he at once flung himself into the ranks of its adversaries; and the most splendid speech to which that controversy gave rise, after Mr. Plunket's, was made by Mr. Bushe. On the measure being carried, he had serious thoughts of removing to England, for he considered Dublin as now become a provincial town. The difficulties into which his honourable conduct in undertaking to discharge the debts of his family had placed him, prevented, in all probability, the execution of this plan, and in the course of a few years he became first Solicitor-General under Mr. Plunket and Mr. Saurin successively, and afterwards, in Lord Wellesley's first viceroyalty, he succeeded Lord Downes, as Chief Justice of the King's Bench. All parties allow that during the fierce political contest which filled the period of nineteen years during which he was a law-officer of the crown, he performed his duty with perfect honour towards the Government, but with the most undeviating humanity and toleration towards their opponents in church or state. Nor has the breath of calumny ever tarnished the purity of his judicial character during the twenty years that he presided on the bench. He was stern in his administration of the criminal law, but he was rigidly impartial as he was severe. In one particular he was perfect, and it is of great importance in a judge; he knew no distinction of persons among those who practised before him, unless it was to protect and encourage rising merit; for a young advocate was ever sure of his ear, even when the fastidiousness of veteran practitioners might disregard his efforts. This kindly disposition he carried with him from the bar, where he had been always remarkable for the courtesy with which he treated his juniors; indeed, it went further; it was a constant habit of protecting and encouraging them.

His oratorical excellence was plainly of a kind which might lead us to expect a similar success in written composition. Accordingly he stood very high among the writers of the day; so high that we may well lament his talents being bestowed upon subjects of an ephemeral interest. The work by which he is chiefly known as an author, is the pamphlet on the Union, published in answer to the Castle manifesto, written by Mr. Under-Secretary Cooke. Mr. Bushe's tract is called "*Cease your funning*," and it consists of a well-sustained ironical attack upon the Under-Secretary, whom it assumes to be an United Irishman, or other rebel, in disguise. The plan of such an irony is, for a long work, necessarily defective. It

must needs degenerate occasionally into tameness; and it runs the risk every now and then of being taken for serious; as I well remember an ironical defence of the Slave Trade once upon a time so much failed of its object that some worthy abolitionists were preparing an answer to it, when they were informed that the author was an ally in disguise. No such fate was likely to befall "*Cease your funning.*" It is, indeed, admirably executed; as successfully as a work on such a plan can be; and reminds the reader of the best of Dean Swift's political writings, being indeed every way worthy of his pen.

It would be impossible to give any specimens of this far-famed pamphlet; but there was another, the production of his earlier years, which appears to me possessed of the greatest merit; it is an answer to Paine's "*Rights of Man*;" and it would be hard to say whether the sound and judicious reasoning, or the beautiful and chaste composition, most deserve our admiration. Mr. Bushe was only four-and-twenty when this work appeared, and it is no exaggeration to say that it deserves a place on the same level with Mr. Burke's celebrated "*Reflections.*" To support such a panegyric, examples will be required; and I have no fear in appealing to such passages as the following, after premising that they differ in no respect from the rest of the work, which extends to above eighty pages.

"Any man who has studied the merits and enjoyed the blessings of the English constitution, cannot but be alarmed when the legislators of France ('these babes and sucklings in politics') are held up in their cradle to the imitation of a country whose government adds the strength of maturity to the venerable aspect of age; a government which I trust will not be exchanged for a certain tumult in the first instance, and a doubtful reform in the second. I love liberty as much as Mr. Paine; but differ from him in my opinion of what it is—I pant not for the range of a desert, unbounded, barren, and savage; but prefer the limited enjoyments of cultivation, whose confines, while they restrain, protect us, and add to the quality more than they deduct from the quantity of my freedom; this I feel to be my birthright as a subject of Great Britain, and cannot but tremble for my happiness, when a projector recommends to level the wise and ancient land-marks, break down the fences, and disfigure the face of every inheritance. I have no wish to return to the desert in search of my natural rights; I consider myself to have exchanged them for the better, and am determined to stand by the bargain.

"These sentiments, my dear Sir, have tempted me to trouble you and the public with this book. The times are critical, and the feeblest exertion cannot be unwelcome, when a factory of

An expression of Paine's applied to others.

sedition¹ is set up in the metropolis, and an assistant club sends an inflammatory pamphlet through the kingdom; when these state quacks, infecting their country at the heart, circulate, by fomenting applications, the poisons to the extremities, and reduce the price of the pestilence, lest the poverty of any creature should protect him from its contagion. The times are critical when such a book as Mr. Paine's appears, and the consequences would be fatal if its success were proportioned to the zeal of its author, or the assiduity of its propagators. It is a system of false metaphysics and bad politics. Any attempt to carry it into effect must be destructive of peace, and there is nothing practical in it but its mischief. It holds out inducements to disturbance on the promise of improvement, and softens the prospect of immediate disorder, in the cant of the empiric, '*You must be worse before you can be better.*' It excites men to what they ought not to do, by informing them of what they can do, and preaches rights to promote wrongs.² It is a collection of unamiable speculations, equally subversive of good government, good thinking, and good feeling. It establishes a kind of republic in the mind; dethrones the majesty of sentiment; degrades the dignity of noble and elevated feelings; and substitutes a democracy of mean and vulgar calculation. In their usurpation, all the grace, and elegance, and order of the human heart is overturned, and the state of man,

' Like to a little kingdom, suffers
The nature of an insurrection '——'

The following passage is somewhat more ambitious and figurative, though not more terse and epigrammatic; and, though less severe, it cannot be justly charged with violating the canons of correct taste.

"If the institution of honours perfects and stimulates ambition, and that ambition looks beyond the grave, will not this perpetuation of the prize increase the emulation? Is there nothing to enhance our honour in the consideration that it is to be transmitted to the children of your affection, and that you are the ennobler of many? Is ambition fully gratified, or desert half rewarded by a distinction perishable as yourself, to be laid down ere it is well won, and to crumble into dust with your remains? Is the reward of merit to be entrusted to the ungrateful memory of mankind? Shall its reward be late and its enjoyment short? That deviation from strict justice is not very severe, and is certainly very politic, which indulges the manes of the father with the honours of the son, and forbids man, in the contemplation of his mortality, to

¹ An instrument was sold in France for less than half-a-crown, called "*Droits de l'Homme*." It concealed a cut-and-thrust sword, and looked like a common whip.

² An association had been formed in Dublin for the purpose of circulating Paine's book, at a low price, through the country.

look upon his inducements as insufficient, and his rewards as incomplete. The wreath of fame would not be worth the wear if it was not evergreen; and the laurel is its emblem because it does not wither. In these considerations I discover a probable and a wise origin of hereditary dignities, as far as their institution regards the person upon whom they were first conferred: in regard to him the reward of merit was enlarged; in regard to others the encouragement to exertion was increased. But the wisdom of hereditary dignities does not rest here. There is a principle in the heart of man which any wise government will encourage, because it is the auxiliary of virtue,—I mean the principle of honour which, in those moments of weakness when conscience slumbers, watches over the deserted charge, and engages friends in the defence of integrity. It is a sanction of conduct which the imagination lends to virtue, is itself the reward, and inflicts shame as the punishment. The audacity of vice may despise fear; the sense of reason may be steeled: art may elude temporal, and impiety defy eternal, vengeance; but honour holds the scourge of shame, and he is hard indeed who trembles not under its lash. Even if the publicity of shame be avoided, its sanction is not destroyed. Every one suffers when ashamed of himself, and the blushes of the heart are agony. The dread of shame is the last good quality which forsakes the breast, and the principle of honour frequently retains it when every other instance of good conduct has abandoned the heart. This sentiment must ever be in proportion to a man's opinions of what is expected from him; and in proportion as he is taught that much is expected from him, will it swell in his bosom and sharpen his sensibility. I cannot therefore discover a mere '*diminutive childishness*'¹ in the institution of hereditary dignities, if they cherish this sentiment, and if this sentiment cherishes virtue; and France has '*breeched herself*'² into manhood to little purpose of good government in putting down the delusion, if delusion it is. An establishment is something more than '*puerile*,'³ which gives encouragement to virtue, dignity to worth, adds the idea of great to good, and makes that splendid which was useful. Society was made for man; and, as man is various, and frail, and vain, it does not disdain to promote his happiness by playing on his foibles; its strength is armed against his fears; his hopes are fed by its rewards; and its blandishments are directed to his vanities. Virtue, coldly entertained in any other corner of the heart, will take a strong hold in the pride of man. She has often erected her temple on the coronets of a glorious ancestry, and the world has been indebted to the manes of the dead for the merits of the living."

The reader of these fine passages is at once reminded of Mr. Burke, and the best of his writings on the French Revolution

¹ Paine's expression.

² *Ib.*

³ *Ib.*

and the frame of society. It is impossible to doubt that Mr. Bushe had deeply studied that great performance, and that he unavoidably, in treating the same subject, fell into a similarity of style, while he felt a common sentiment with that illustrious author. But there is nothing servile in the imitation, if imitation it be; and of the thousands who have endeavoured to tread the same path, no one but he has been successful. Indeed, it may well be affirmed that, successfully to imitate Mr. Burke, asks Mr. Burke's own genius; and woe betide the wight who, without his strength, ventures to put on his armour. Among the various anecdotes¹ that have been preserved of the Chief Justice, there is no record of Mr. Burke having been made acquainted with the masterly performance of his fellow-labourer. He who opened his arms to the able and brilliant, but very inferior coadjutor, whom he found in Professor Wyldé, must have received with delight such an ally as the author of this admirable book. It clearly contains not merely the germ and rudiments of the extraordinary, and in some sort peculiar, eloquence for which its author was afterwards so remarkable, but, with a few occasional exceptions in point of severity, a few deviations from simplicity, pardonable on such a subject, it exhibits that very diction itself which distinguished him—chaste and pure, addressed continually to the subject in hand, instinct with epigram, sufficiently but soberly sprinkled with flowers, often sharpened with sarcasm, always akin to serious and wise reflection. When we reflect that this was the work of a very young man, the maturity and gravity of the style, as well as the reasoning, becomes exceedingly striking; and it is interesting to observe the impression which a perusal of it left on its author's mind after an interval of many years. He possibly felt some of that mortification which Sir Joshua Reynolds and other great artists are known to have expressed upon remarking the excellence of their earlier efforts, and being sensible how little their pencil had afterwards improved. Be that as it may, the following note lies before me in the Chief Justice's hand, dated August, 1831, and it may appropriately close these commentaries.

"I have read over," says his Lordship, "a pamphlet which I wrote in 1791, when a very young man, in my twenty-fifth year; and although my better, at least older, judgment and taste condemn

¹ In various periodical publications there have been accounts of Mr. Bushe at all times of his life. Some of these take him up as early as 1822, on his elevation to the bench; others come down to his retirement; and some have appeared since his death. I have, of course, consulted them all, as well as resorted to private sources of information. That upon some of them, at least, no reliance can safely be placed, is clear from the random way in which facts and dates are dealt with. What shall be said of the careful attention to this subject, of writers who make Lord Grenville's government be dismissed in 1803, and Mr. Bushe have then been thirteen years at the bar; and who represent Mr. Sheridan as taking a part against the Coercion Bill in 1817 when he died in 1816, and had not been in Parliament since 1812?

some instances of hasty and erroneous opinions rashly hazarded, much superficial and inaccurate reasoning, and several puerilities and affectations of style, yet, at the end of forty years, I abide by most of the principles which I then maintained, and consider the execution of the work, taken altogether, as better than any thing of which I am now capable."

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

We have had occasion to note the extraordinary capacity and brilliant history of Washington and Franklin, next to whom undoubtedly among the great men that founded the American republic is to be mentioned Jefferson, although he follows them at a considerable distance. But without the extraordinary virtue of the one—because, indeed, he never passed through the same temptation,—and without the singular genius of the other, his services to the great cause of human liberty were truly valuable; his life was steadily devoted to the maintenance of his principles; and he displayed both firmness and ability in the important scenes in which he performed a conspicuous part. [At a time when there is an unaccountable disposition, even among the friends of liberty, to undervalue the institutions of the Great Republic, to grudge her extraordinary success, and to take delight in foretelling her dismemberment and her downfall, it becomes a duty to commemorate the virtues of her founders, even if we should not in all particulars adopt their political opinions, and if we should witness with pain some glaring imperfections in the frame or in the working of the polity which they established.]

He was educated very carefully for the profession of the law, and had also the inestimable advantage of good classical and scientific instruction. He studied the mathematics under Dr. Small, a brother of the mathematician of that name, who acquired great fame among geometers by his demonstrations of Dr. Matthew Stewart's celebrated Porisms. When Jefferson came to Virginia, his native state, he was soon distinguished among his brethren as a sound and accurate lawyer. His speaking was plain and businesslike, aspiring to no higher praise. But during the eight years that he continued in the profession his success was so great that he must have risen to the foremost rank as a practitioner. It happened, however, that the disputes between the mother country and the colonies now broke out, and being chosen in his twenty-fifth year to represent his

county in the Virginian Assembly, he soon withdrew his attention from legal pursuits, and finally abandoned them altogether, when he led the way to the Revolution by his Resolution which the Assembly adopted to establish a Committee of Correspondence with the legislatures of the other colonies. The Convention, and then the General Congress, soon followed; indeed, they grew naturally out of the Committee, and only waited the next act of oppression from England to mature them. Yet still there was the most marked reluctance to throw off the yoke of the mother country. Jefferson himself, in a letter to the Attorney-General, Randolph, written so late as the middle of 1775, and after the first blood that stained the unhappy quarrel had been shed, declared that "in the whole empire there was not a man who more cordially loved the union with Great Britain;" but he added his fixed resolution not to bear taxation without representation.¹ Even after the battle of Bunker's Hill he expressed to his old master, Ar. Small, then settled in Scotland, his anxious hopes of conciliation. The party called moderate, in contradistinction to the Washingtons and Jeffersons, that under Dickenson, were not less prepared for desperate extremities, if the cardinal point of taxation should not be conceded by England. It is certain, and it is the greatest praise which can be bestowed upon any people in such circumstances, that all parties were guided by men who united extraordinary firmness with singular moderation—men, above all, whose singleness of purpose never appears in any instance to have been suspected.

But if, in contemplating their whole conduct in the different courses which they had to steer, we look in vain for any deviation from the line of principle and integrity, we also find it impossible to discover any material error of judgment committed in the whole management of their perilous and perplexing affairs. [From all the unreflecting violence, the sudden changes, the intemperate excesses, the thoughtless desertion of leaders, the alternations of popular admiration and hatred, by which other revolutions have been so constantly distinguished, when the people were the principal agents in bringing them about, it must be confessed with wonder that the conduct of the Americans was wholly exempt. No deliberative assembly of men, small in number and acting free from all popular instigation or control, ever carried on the affairs of a community settled in peace and whose existence was assured, with greater calmness or more steady judgment than the American Congress showed in guiding a revolutionary movement, involving at each step of its progress their own existence and that of the community whom they represented and governed.]

¹ The thoughtless folly of some in the United States and some in France likening the case of the Union with Ireland to the subordination of America, exceeds belief. Who in America would ever have rebelled, nay, who would ever have agitated, if the Americans had been represented in our Parliament?

When it seemed manifest that neither side would yield and a separation became inevitable, a committee of five, at the head of whom was Jefferson, received the commission to prepare a manifesto of their reasons for at length taking the great step. His colleagues were Franklin, Adams, Sherman, and Livingston; the paper was prepared by him; they made few alterations, but the Congress omitted about a third part of it, in order to avoid topics that might give offence in the mother country. Among these omissions was a paragraph reprobating the African slave-trade, to which they might not unjustly suppose England was partial, inasmuch as she had formerly interposed her authority—shamefully, scandalously, wickedly interposed it—to prevent the abolition earnestly desired by her colonial subjects. Nevertheless, it is possible that the omission was also made with a view to conciliate the slave-holding states who had not yet resolved to set their faces against this great abomination. With these omissions and the further alteration of a few lines, the instrument was finally adopted, and it was signed on the Fourth of July.

This is that famous *Declaration of Independence* by which the freemen of the New World approved themselves worthy of their ancestors in the Old—those ancestors who had spoken, and written, and fought, and perished for conscience and for freedom's sake,—but whose descendants in the Old had not always borne their high lineage in mind. In the history of mankind there is no more important event, on which side soever of the Atlantic its consequences may be regarded; and if tyrants are sometimes said to feel uneasy on the Thirtieth of January, how much more fitted to inspire alarm are the recollections associated with the Fourth of July, in which no remorse can mingle on the people's part, and no consolation is afforded to their oppressors by the tendency of cruelty and injustice to mar the work they stain!

I have noted the unfortunate omission of the paragraph relating to the Slave Trade; and it is only just to Jefferson's memory that it should here be inserted. The frame of the Declaration was to charge all the grievances complained of directly upon the King of England.

“He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people, who never offended him, captivating¹ and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to more miserable death in their transportation thither. The piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his prerogative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable com-

¹ As usual this will be reckoned an Americanism (as the Greeks used to say of their colonists a *Sokoclasm*). But it has undoubted English authority—Locke among others,

merce. And, that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting these very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also has obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the *liberties* of one people with crimes which he urges them to commit against the *lives* of another."

It is to the unspeakable honour of Jefferson, that, born and bred in Virginia, himself an owner of negroes like all Virginian landholders, his first motion in the Assembly was a proposition to facilitate the manumission of slaves. It was not till 1782 that the full power of emancipation was given by the legislature. But his proposal in 1779 was still further in advance of his age; it was to declare all children of slaves, born after a certain day, free, and to carry them at a certain age as colonists of a new territory, the only practical scheme, perhaps, by which the foul blot of slavery can be removed from the United States.

His plan for the planting of elementary schools to educate the whole people, and of establishing colleges for the middle classes, and an university for the higher branches of learning, was fated to experience similar delays, though happily not so long protracted; in 1796 it was partially, and in 1816 wholly, adopted by the Virginian legislature. In another favourite scheme he was more successful. The English law against perpetuities had strangely been modified, or rather abrogated, in Virginia, in the reign of Queen Anne; so that there was no power of cutting off an entail by fine or recovery, or in any other way than by a private or estate bill. Early in the Revolutionary war Jefferson succeeded in repealing this colonial law, and he soon after also obtained an abrogation of the law of primogeniture. The effect of the change has been great, and has spread universally in Virginia. *Men's* disposition of their property has followed the legal provision; no one thinks of making an eldest son his general heir; a corresponding division of wealth has taken place; there is no longer a class living in luxurious indulgence, while others are dependant and poor; you no longer see so many great equipages, but you meet everywhere with carriages sufficient for use and comfort; and though formerly some families possessed more plate than any one house can now show, the whole plate in the country (says a late historian) is increased forty if not fiftyfold. It is affirmed with equal confidence, that though the class of over-refined persons has been exceedingly curtailed, if not exterminated, the number of well-educated people has been incalculably increased. Nor does a session pass without disclosing talents, which, sixty or seventy years ago, would have been deemed so rare as to carry a name from south to north of the Union.

Jefferson, however, was not more zealous in promoting all measures which might prevent the growth of aristocratic distinc-

Primogen.

tions and maintain the level of republican equality, than he was in furthering whatever might tend to complete religious liberty, with which he conscientiously deemed an established church to be incompatible. Upon this subject we may entertain a very different opinion, and may, with the most entire devotion to the principles of toleration, be able to descry dangers to those principles from the zeal of sects, as well as from the preponderance of a State Church. No one who contemplates the intolerance exercised during the times of the Commonwealth in this country can repose any great reliance upon the meekness or the liberality of conflicting sectaries, while it must be admitted by all men, even by candid dissenters, that the established Church is a mild ruler to those within her pale, a quiet and inoffensive neighbour to those without. But how far a church establishment is compatible with purely republican institutions is a very different question; and it would be most rash to condemn Jefferson's persevering efforts for eradicating all ecclesiastical privileges, when we reflect that he was acting as a strict, even a stern, republican. The clergy of Virginia had from the earliest settlement of the colony been endowed not only with tithe but with a parochial assessment, although the proportion of dissenters had increased to almost an equality with the numbers of the churchmen. It was not till the year 1799 that Jefferson's efforts were crowned with entire success, and the last marks of preference to one church over the rest were finally effaced. They who agreed with him in opinion upon this important subject maintain confidently that all remains of religious intolerance have been extinguished by those measures, and that the means of spiritual instruction have been greatly extended; but how far the cause of sound and rational religion generally has gained, can only be ascertained by the experience of a longer time.

After having for two years held the office of Governor of Virginia by election, Jefferson was in 1782 chosen to represent that State in Congress. But it was no longer the same body in which he had acted during the tempestuous period of the Revolution, when it consisted only of 50 or 60 persons, all men of business, men of action. He was abundantly sensible of the difference, and looking back on the days when "the Washingtons and the Franklins were wont at once to seize the great point of a question, leaving the little ones to follow of themselves, and never treat two arguments at a time," he adds, "if the present Congress errs in too much talking, how can it be otherwise in a body to which the people send 150 lawyers, whose trade it is to question every thing, yield nothing, and talk by the hour?" From this scene he was not sorry to be released by accepting the mission to Paris, where he remained as minister of the United States from 1784 till 1790. The interest which he took in the great Revolution may well be conceived, intimately connected as it was with the American in-

dependence ; but his foresight of its progress was not clearer than other men's, for he never doubted that a year after his return to America would see the "certain and happy termination of the struggle for liberty."

He now, at Washington's earnest request, overcame the hearty desire which he had of retiring into private life, and became his Secretary of State. If any one could doubt that great man's sincerely republican feelings, this anxiety for the introduction into his cabinet of the very chief of the democratic party must at once dispel all such fancies. The able and virtuous leader of the Federalists in that cabinet was Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury ; Knox, the Secretary at War, joined him ; while Randolph, the Attorney-General, sided with Jefferson. But Washington, taking part with neither, held the balance even between them with the scrupulous justice which marked his lofty nature, and with the firm hand which he of all men most possessed. [It is strange, it is melancholy, to see the folly of sanguine men in pertinaciously believing that those things have a real existence which they vehemently wish were true. Because Washington never took part with the French faction, and kept aloof from the more violent movements of the democratic party, and because Hamilton and others of the Federalists despaired of a republican government being practicable, or at least permanent, in a great community, the party in this country most opposed to popular institutions, and who retained a hankering after monarchical government in America, must needs flatter themselves that there remained in the United States a leaning towards the British yoke, and that at all events the illustrious President as well as the Federalist chiefs were friendly to kingly power. The truth is, that even Hamilton, the most open admirer of our institutions, never dreamed of giving them another trial in America, until all attempts to establish a lasting republic should be found to fail. His words were remarkable in recommending that all other modifications of popular government should be tried before recourse was again had to monarchy. "That mind," he said, "must be really depraved which would not prefer the equality of political rights, the foundation of pure republicanism, if it were to be obtained eventually with order." Accordingly each year that what he regarded as the great, though not very promising experiment, continued without a failure—each year that the American constitution proved sufficient for the government of the rapidly-extending people—diminished those apprehensions upon which alone his opinion rested. But Washington never felt any such fears, and wanted no experience to confirm his deliberate purpose of a republic.] Towards England he never felt any sentiments but those of distrust and alienation ; and his well-considered judgment respecting a return to monarchy may be easily gathered from his remarkable expression when endeavouring to prevent Jefferson's resig-

nation in 1793, even after the excesses of the French Revolution had lessened the number of republicans everywhere, "that he did not believe there were ten men in the United States for a monarchy." They who flattered themselves that Washington was disposed to content those ten may be classed with the men whose sanguine temperament no disappointments can cure,—the class among whom, to the lasting misfortune of this country, Mr. Pitt held an eminent place, as he showed when a friend carried him a letter from Geneva, mentioning the assembling of an army of reserve near Dijon, and received for answer from the minister, that "he must have a very disaffected correspondent." The army, whose existence at Dijon was thus deemed impossible, because it was unpleasant, in less than a month after decided the fate of Europe at Marengo.

When Washington resigned, Jefferson was proposed for the Presidency, but Adams obtained it, and he was chosen Vice-President. At the expiration of Adams's three years, Jefferson succeeded him; and set an example to all party chiefs when promoted to power. He made it his rule never either to remove an adversary because his own partisans required it, or to retain one because his enemies threatened and assailed him. He pursued his own course, regardless of the taunts from one party or the importunity of the other; and, although exposed to more unmeasured abuse than any man that ever filled his high station, he lived to see full justice done him, and the firm and manly course of his administration generally approved. It is profitable to consider such an example; and they who are unable to follow it, respecting measures as well as men, may be well assured that they mistook their vocation when they assumed to direct the councils of their country. Whoever suffers himself to be seduced or deterred from the path of his duty, does not rule, but obey; he usurps the place of others; he pretends to guide, when he slavishly follows; but he puts forth false pretences, and would be understood to act for himself, while he is but a tool in other men's hands, he meanly undertaking the responsibility for the profit or the patronage, they dictating his conduct while they skulk in the dark. It is a compact equally dishonouring both the parties, and of which the country whose best interests are sacrificed by it has the most just right to complain.

Although Jefferson retired from public life at the close of his second presidency, in 1806, his days were prolonged for twenty years beyond that period, and these he passed on his estate in Virginia, superintending agricultural improvements, and watching over the university which he had founded and which he regarded with unceasing parental care. Like the other chief magistrates of the Republic, he retired without any fortune, and his property was at his decease found barely sufficient to pay his debts. It was a singular and affecting coincidence, that when the people were assembled in

countless numbers to celebrate the Fiftieth anniversary of the American Independence, the passing-bell should toll of Adams, one of the last surviving patriots who had signed the memorable act of the Fourth of July. On that day he expired; but it was after a few days found, that at the same time another of the patriarchs of the new world had also rested from his labours: the author of that famous instrument had, on the same day, closed his earthly course, in his 84th year.

It is impossible to close the page of history which records the foundation of the Great Republic, without adverting to the singular change that seems of late years to have come over some friends of liberty in this country inclining them against the popular institutions which that system consecrates, and upon which it reposes. Writers of ability, but scantily endowed with candour, observers of moderate circumspection, men labouring under the prejudices of European society, and viewing the social system of the new world through the medium of habits and associations peculiar to that of the old, have brought back for our information a number of details, for which they needed hardly to cross the Atlantic, and have given us as discoveries a relation of matters necessarily existing under a very popular government, and in a very new community. As those travellers had pretty generally failed to make many converts among the friends of free institutions either in France or in England, there would have been little harm done to the cause of truth, and no great interruption given to the friendly relations which the highest interests of both countries require should be maintained unbroken between them. But unhappily some persons of a superior class appear, from party or from personal feelings, to have, without due reflection on the mischief they were doing, suffered their minds to be poisoned by the same prejudices; and a signal indiscretion having suffered their private letters written under the influence of such prepossessions, to see the light, it becomes every one, whose general opinions coincide with those of the individuals in question, to protest against the inference that such sentiments are shared by the Liberal party in England. This becomes the more necessary, in consequence of the tendency which the most reprehensible conduct of some of the states in the Union towards their public creditors has to prepare the way for the reception of such unsound opinions—opinions which, if left to themselves, would probably soon sink into oblivion, how respectable soever the quarters which they may, without due reflection, have been suffered to reach. I allude more particularly to some letters lately published of Lord Sydenham, written confidentially to his late colleagues, while he was acting under them as Governor-General of British North Ame-

rica—letters the publication of which has, to me, who knew their writer, and respected his generally sound principles, been a subject of much regret, which he appears to have written in a moment of some irritation, but which would do serious injury to the good understanding that happily has been restored between the two nations, if they were supposed to speak the sense of those among us who are most friendly to America.]

[A great deal of vague and general abuse may be passed over, as that the Americans "are a calculating people, and fight not for glory but plunder"—"such a set of braggadocios, that their public men must submit to the claims of their extravagant vanity and self-sufficiency"—that there is among them a "general debasement;"—"that those who aim at place are corrupt and corrupters, and the masses who bestow preferment ignorant, prejudiced, dishonest, and utterly immoral."] I fear me most if not all of this railing might be retorted upon a certain nation whose wars in China have been warmly eulogised by Lord Sydenham in another letter, though he is greatly scandalised that all the glory of his friends is not likely to prevent their seats "slipping from under them;"¹ a nation whose general elections have of late years been found a scene of the most hateful corruption, although we should be guilty of a most gross and unpardonable exaggeration were we on this account to stigmatise the whole people as "utterly immoral" in the terms rashly applied to his neighbours by the Canadian Governor.

But the charges which he allows himself to lay, and which his relatives have thought it right to publish, are more specific. "The Government seems to me the worst of tyrannies, that of the mob supported by the most odious and profligate corruption. No man who aims at power dare avow an opinion of his own; he must pander to the lowest prejudices of the people, and in their parties (the two great ones which now divide the Union, the Loco-focos and the Whigs) the only subject of the leading men of either is to instil some wretchedly low sentiment into the people, and then explode it for their own advantage. There is scarcely a statesman of either who would not adopt the most violent or the basest doctrine, however, if he thought that he could work it to advantage with the majority—peculation and jobbing are the only objects; delusion, and the basest flattery of the people, the means."—"If," adds this discreet statesman, "they drive us into a war, the *Blacks* in the South will soon settle all that part of the Union; and in the North I feel sure that we can lick them to their heart's content."—"A Republic could answer

¹ The *naïveté* of this passage is exceedingly great. "But what is the use of all this glory if your seats slip from under you?" Then, after a great abuse of John Bull, "I am afraid that the possession of power is making me terribly inclined to despotism, for I am thinking of planting my cabbages rather under the shade of Metternich or the Czar," etc., p. 326. To be sure; and this is exactly the consequence of being Governor-General with dictatorial power.

in former times, in countries where there was *no people*, or few; the bulk of the population Helots and slaves; but where there is a people, and they really have the power, government is only possible by pandering to their worst passions, which makes the country unbearable to a man of any education, and the Central Government itself a byword amongst civilized nations. I hope (he concludes, perhaps consistently enough) that we may live long enough to see this great bubble burst; and I do not believe that we need be very long-lived for that" (316).]

[I am sorry to be under the necessity of declaring that one is at a loss whether most to marvel at the total want of common reflection, or the extraordinary want of common information, in this passage] —the production of a man in high office, addressed to a man still higher, and who presumes, without any deliberation, and with no knowledge of the subject, to pronounce so sweeping a censure upon the whole body of a great nation, all their statesmen, and all their institutions. [It is fit the Americans should well understand that these are the errors and this the rashness of the late Governor-General of Canada, and not shared by the Liberal party, or by any but the most ignorant and the most prejudiced in this country.]

First of all, Lord Sydenham is no authority on the subject of the United States, merely because he was Governor of Canada, and never in the Union at all. Had he remained in London he would have been as well qualified to judge of those States, as his living near them for two years could make him; nay, a great deal better; for his residence in Canada, without giving him one tittle more of information, had the manifest tendency to fill his mind with Canadian prejudices; and these views seem to gain a still greater ascendant over him by the disputes of a border nature, in which he was involved. I should, during the separation of England and Scotland before the seventeenth century, never have looked to the Warden of the West Marches for a candid account of the people on the Scotch border when he lived at Carlisle. But, had the Warden directed his hostile operations from York or from Lincoln, I should have believed him just as ignorant as if he had lived in London, and a very great deal more prejudiced.

Next, let us observe how little the Governor-General had studied constitutions when he assumes the office of deciding on their comparative merits. It would not be easy to crowd more manifest errors into one sentence than are found in the few lines about ancient republics. Many things respecting those systems are obscurely known, and are therefore the subject of controversy; but no one ever affected to doubt of the matters on which this strange sentence errs, and errs dogmatically. Sparta is of course alluded to by the mention of Helots; but Sparta was not a republican, it was an aristocratic government. Then Athens, which was a republic, so far from proving that such a government "could answer," is precisely the

example always resorted to in order to prove what Lord Sydenham states to be the vice of the American Government as contrasted with the Grecian, namely, the statesmen "pandering to the passions of the people." Yet, this notwithstanding, can any one say that Athens, the very seat of this worst of vices, was by it "made unbearable to a man of any education?" Does he conceive that any of us, even in Canada, are more refined, more civilised, more educated, than the ornaments of Athenian society, the very men who were fain to court the people? It is another error equally great to make it the peculiar characteristic of the modern republic, and the feature that distinguishes it from the ancient, that the "people really had the power." In Athens, if anywhere, they really had the power; we are only left to speculate on the restraints under which it was exercised, and even to doubt if any such existed in practice. But assuredly the bulk of the power was in their hands more than in any other democracy, ancient or modern.

That in the American Government there exist great imperfections no man can doubt; one among the greatest has lately been removed, because the central power of the Federacy is now enabled better to maintain its relations with foreign states in consequence of the recent improvement of the constitutional law. But there remain blots which still disfigure the system, and in practice sadly mar its working. Of these the very worst, undoubtedly, is the entire change of public functionaries, from the highest to the lowest, which follows every change of the President, converts all the more considerable members of the community into place-hunters, and makes the whole interval, between one election of chief magistrate and another, a constant scene of canvass. The removal of this and a few other imperfections would make the Government of America as faultless as a very popular system can ever be. That some and even considerable evils would be left, evils inseparable from a Republic, because growing out of the large share assigned to the people in the distribution of power, cannot be doubted. But it is no discovery of Lord Sydenham's, that as long as men are men power and pre-eminence will be sought after; and that if the power of bestowing these is vested in the people, the people will be courted by those who seek after them.

We are upon a practical, not a speculative, question; and that question is not as to the impossible attainment of theoretical perfection, but as to the comparative merits of different schemes of polity. Power must rest in some part of the community. Patronage must immediately or ultimately rest with them that have the power. Shall they be the people at large? No, says Lord Sydenham; for if the people are to choose their ministers, they who would fill ministerial places will debase themselves by pandering to the people's prejudices. But what if we entrust this delicate office to a court or a prince, for the purpose of making the duty be more uprightly dis-

charged, and exalting the character of the candidates for favour? Are we so blinded by the evils of popular canvass as to have all of a sudden forgotten that other time-serving, that old species of fawning, that worser form of flattery, which the friends of freedom and of purity used to charge upon the parasites of princes, the crew of courtiers, the minions who pander to the propensities, not of the people, but the despot? Then shall power and patronage be vested in a patrician body, in a class of men whom "a man of education" might well find not "unbearable?" The class fawned upon would here no doubt be found more refined in its tastes, and must be propitiated with more dainty flattery. Yet I question if the fawning would be less active, if the suppleness of the candidate for favour would be less pliant, if the senator would be less given to cringe, than they who, instead of crawling in the anteroom of the noble, after a more homely fashion take the hand of the peasant and the mechanic. I greatly doubt if less falsehood will be found in the smooth speeches addressed to the select patrician circle than in the boisterous harangues delivered to win the plebeian. One ground of my doubt is the recollection which we all have of the scenes of endless intrigue and wide-spread corruption displayed by the aristocratic courts of modern Italy, to say nothing of ancient Rome in her more patrician days; and another ground of my doubt is precisely this, that men are more prone to practise deception in secret than in public, and therefore more likely to use unworthy acts in the closet, the appointed scene of intrigue, than on the hustings, from whence the grosser species of intrigue, at least, must for ever be banished.

And here is furnished a very striking proof of the entire carelessness with which this political reasoner made his observations upon America, and formed his opinions respecting her people. He plainly affirms of all statesmen in the United States that "their only objects are speculation and jobbing," and their means of being enabled to speculate and job are "the basest flattery of the people." Now surely a very little reflection would have sufficed to satisfy any considerate person that this charge is wholly impossible. The existence of such violent party divisions, and the publicity with which every department of Government is administered, make speculation impracticable. They might as well be charged with "compassing and imagining the death of the King." It is an offence which in such a country can have no existence. But this manifest error into which the writer has fallen, while it shows the strength of his prejudices against the Americans, proves also the weakness of his means of annoyance, and it is a sufficient answer to much of his general invective.

As to the standing topic of vulgar manners, let it be fairly stated that there are many parts both of France and England to which we should not think of resorting were we in quest of patterns of polished manners. Even while representing Manchester, Lord Sydenham

would hardly have cited the bulk of his constituents as superior in elegance to the people of New York. But an authority fully as high as himself on this delicate matter, M. de Lafayette, would have severely chid him for underrating even the manners of the Americans; and if, after such an authority, any further defence were required, two facts may be mentioned. Sir R. Liston declared that he had never conversed with a better bred sovereign in any court of Europe than General Washington; and among the women of the highest breeding in our day no one would hesitate to mention Lady Wellesley. ¹ They who have never been in the United States may surely be pardoned if they feel unable to believe the notion entertained by others who, like themselves and Lord Sydenham, have also never been there, but who would yet assume General Washington and Lady Wellesley to be the only persons of fine manners ever produced in the Union.

[It is, however, not avowedly on the score of their under-breeding that the Governor-General rests his dislike of the Americans. On the contrary, he rather seems disposed to pass that head of complaint lightly, though it is plainly enough at the bottom of many feelings upon the subject. His main accusation is the mob tyranny, and the habit of their public men quailing before it. No doubt a certain degree of this evil is inseparable from every popular Government.] Who in Ireland dares profess any opinion hostile to the Romish hierarchy throughout three of the provinces, or favourable to it in the fourth? Who in 1831 was safe in England if he proclaimed his dislike of the Reform Bill? What public meeting has any moderate liberal politician ventured to hold of late years? Have not even the corn-law repealers been fain to raise the popular cry of cheap bread in assemblies collected by tickets, and from which the multitude were carefully excluded? [We may not go so far as the Americans in humouring the popular cry of the hour when we address our constituents, because our Government is less purely popular than theirs; but can any one doubt that the speeches of our political chiefs—aye, and even their measures when in office—take the tincture of the multitude to whom they are addressed, and whose favour they are expected to conciliate?] If this be denied, we may require to be informed what Lord Sydenham precisely means when—adverting to the free-trade measures respecting timber, sugar, and, above all, corn, in 1841—he says, “It is an immense point gained to get a new flag under which to fight. The people of England do not care a rush for any of your Irish hobbyhorses; and they are not with you upon Church matters, or grievances of that kind. Even your foreign policy has not touched them the least, and I doubt

¹ Others might well be added. For example, Lady Ashburton; but her long residence in this country prevents all, excepting a few, from recollecting that she came from America in her younger days as highly accomplished in manners as the world has more lately seen her.

whether twenty victories would give you a borough or a county; but you have now given them an intelligible principle offering practical benefits to contend for, and though defeated on it, as you doubtless will be, defeat will be attended with reputation, and will make you, as a party in the country, far stronger than you have been of late" (p. 90). Now it is to be observed that the preference here given to the Corn Bill over the Irish Church Reform and the other measures is not rested on the relative merits, but solely on the relative popular tendency, of the different plans—their *capabilities* as "flags to fight under;" and the Corn-Law is preferred because it is a better party Shibboleth. No doubt Lord Sydenham would have a right to urge that he had always maintained the free-trade doctrine for its own sake; but why will he not allow American statesmen also to prefer their several tenets for their own sakes? Suppose he had found a letter from Mr. Stevenson to a South Carolina friend maintaining that some proposition for preventing anti-slavery petitions from being received by Congress was a fine "flag to fight under," "offered an intelligible principle to contend for," and, though defeated, would make the Virginian "party stronger than it had of late been," how little would it have availed to urge that Mr. Stevenson had always held the same opinions? How triumphantly would Lord Sydenham have pointed to this letter as a confession that American statesmen frame their conduct upon the plan of pandering to the tastes and passions of the multitude? And would it have been deemed an answer to his inference if it had appeared that the party proposing this extreme course had never thought of it for ten years which they had passed in office, but merely brought it forward when all other means of obtaining influence had failed, and when their fortunes among the constituent bodies of the country were become desperate?

But these are possibly extreme cases. Are there no other instances, even in our own better regulated system, so much less disfigured by popular excess than the American;—no instances of public men shaping their conduct and their speeches according to the opinions and feelings, or even the tastes and caprices, of the people, either generally or locally? Surely common fairness towards the Americans required some consideration of the tone taken in our own election addresses, of the speeches made on our own hustings and at our public meetings, of the differences between these and the parliamentary speeches of the same individuals, nay, of the well-known difference between the conduct of Parliament itself during its first and its last session. What minister ever ventured to propose a civil list on the eve of a general election?

(The arts to which our attention is directed by these remarks are in the highest degree discreditable to all who use them, and are incalculably hurtful to the people upon whom they are practised. If they are, to a certain extent, inseparable from a very popular

Government, their mischief forms a serious deduction from the merits of that system. To restrain them within the narrowest possible limits is the bounden duty of all statesmen, but most especially is it the duty of those who maintain the superior advantages of a popular constitution. Them, above all others, it behoves not to lower the character of popular men, not to corrupt the people themselves; for it must never be forgotten that the flattery and the falsehood which taint the atmosphere of a court, the poison which tyrants inhale with their earliest breath, cannot with impunity be inspired by the people.

After all, in estimating the merits of any Government, we must never lose sight of what is the end of all government—the comfort and happiness of the people. It may safely be admitted that if a scheme could be devised for embodying a legislature of wise, virtuous, and enlightened men, with an executive council of capacity, integrity, firmness, removed from popular control, animated with the desire of furthering the public good, and consulting, in the pursuit of it, no will or authority but their own chastened judgment, a much purer and more noble Government would be constituted than any that owes its origin to the public choice, and acts under the people's superintendence. But, unhappily, experience has proved that any legislature, and any executive body, removed from all control, soon forgets the object of its creation; and instead of consulting the good of the community at large, confines all its exertions to furthering its own individual interest. So it must ever be until we are blessed with a descent of angels to undertake the management of our concerns. Till then there is but one security for the community—a watchful superintendence and an efficient control over its representatives and rulers. The experiment may be coarse and clumsy; it may be attended with evils of a very serious kind; it may give rise to an unfortunate influence being exercised by classes of the people who are neither very refined nor always very honest, nor even very well informed as to their own interests. Nevertheless, as human society is constituted, in the choice of evils this is the least; it admits of many compensations; it gives the prospect of much diminution as knowledge and as virtue advance; whereas any system that excludes the popular voice must needs lead to a thralldom and to abuses which admit of no compensation, and, instead of wearing out in time, only gather strength and acquire increased malignity with every year that revolves.]

[The worst of all the features in the Union Lord Sydenham has no doubt passed entirely over—the disgraceful prejudices against negro emancipation. But even these may yield to circumstances, and give place to more rational as well as more humane views of national policy, provided a free government continues to bless America, and no catastrophe happens to destroy the Union.] Lord

Sydenham indeed is thoughtless enough to view with a kind of exultation the prospect of negro insurrection as a consequence of the United States daring to wage war with England. Misguided, short-sighted man! and ignorant, oh, profoundly ignorant of the things that belong to the peace and happiness of either colour in the new world! A negro revolt in our islands, where the whites are as a handful among their sable brethren, might prove fatal to European life, but the African at least would be secure, as far as security can be derived from the successful shedding of blood. But on the continent, where the numbers of the two colours are evenly balanced, and all the arms are in the white man's hands, who but the bitterest enemy of the unhappy slaves could bear to contemplate their wretchedness in the attempt by violence to shake off their chains?—Then again he feels quite confident that the northern states must be utterly defeated, and easily defeated, as soon as they draw the sword against England. Possibly; and yet this inference has not been very logically drawn by Lord Sydenham from the history of the former American war. When the people of the colonies numbered less than three millions, they defeated the best troops of England, possessed as she was of all the strongholds of the country, and sweeping the ocean with her fleets, before the infant republic had a flag floating upon the seas. That twenty-four millions, with entire possession of the land, and a formidable fleet at sea, should be overwhelmed by the Canadians and Nova Scotians, is certainly a possible event; but that it is as much a matter of course as the Governor of these petty settlements complacently assures himself, may reasonably be doubted. Nay, it seems barely possible that some notion should creep into the minds of the Americans, as how a war might lead to the very opposite result of Canada joining with the United States, and forming an additional member of that Great Confederacy.

They, however, who are the best friends of both countries, must be the least willing to indulge on either side in such speculations. [The Americans] will, it is to be hoped, not be tempted to form such pernicious projects by any notion of a hostile feeling towards them prevailing in this country. They may be well assured, that far from regarding their government as “a bubble,” and trusting that it soon may burst, the universal sentiment in England is the hope that it may long continue to exhibit the proud spectacle of popular freedom, and even popular power, combined with order at home, and moderation abroad, in successful refutation of all the old opinions, that a republic was impossible in a large territory with a numerous people.]

MARQUESS WELLESLEY.

If any one were desired to name the family in modern times which, like the Gracchi at Rome, peculiarly excelled all others in the virtues and in the renown of its members, there could hardly be any hesitation in pitching upon the illustrious house of which Lord Mornington, afterwards Marquess Wellesley, was the head. But I had the happiness of a long and uninterrupted friendship with that great man, and enjoyed more particularly his unreserved confidence during the last ten or twelve years of his life. It is fit, therefore, that I distrust my own feelings towards his memory, and in order to preserve impartiality, the first duty of an historian, but the most difficult in writing contemporary history, I shall confine myself in treating of him to the facts which are beyond all controversy, and which, indeed, are the best heralds of his fame.

The family of the Wellesleys originally came from Somersetshire, and by intermarriage with the Cowleys or Colleys, and by a devise from the Poles,¹ obtained large property in Ireland, where they were, in 1756, raised to the Peerage. About sixty years ago they took the name of Wellesley, which, I believe, was their more ancient appellation also in this country. The father of the present generation was a person of talents and virtue, and his taste in music being cultivated in an extraordinary degree, he was the author of some beautiful compositions, which still retain their place in the favour of the musical world. Dying while some of his children were very young, the care of their education was left to their mother,² a daughter of Lord Dungannon, and the family fortune being left in considerable embarrassment, her merit in bringing them through some difficulties, training them to such excellence and such eminence as few families ever attained, exceeds all ordinary praise. This truly venerable matron was permitted by Divine Providence to reap

¹ Lord Maryborough, now Lord Mornington, was the person to whom this valuable gift was made by a gentleman distantly related to the family. His lordship was then a young midshipman, and was offered the fortune upon condition that he quitted the navy and came to reside with his kinsmen. But this he refused, as the war still continued, and he thought leaving the service before the peace would be dishonourable. He supposed, as did his family, that there was an end of the benefaction; but the old gentleman declared by his will that such conduct only increased his esteem for the young man, and left him the Pole estate.

² She was daughter to the first Viscount Dungannon. Her brother died before his father; and the second and late Viscount Dungannon was her nephew. Her father was son to the great-grand-father of the present Marquess of Downshire. Hence the relationship to the Downshire, Salisbury, and Talbot families.

the highest reward which such rare virtues as adorned her character can, in this stage of our existence, receive; for her life was extended to an extreme old age; she saw all the glories of Hindostan, of Spain, and of Waterloo; and left four sons sitting in the House of Lords, not by inheritance, but "by merit raised to that proud eminence."¹

Richard, the eldest son, who at his father's death had nearly attained majority, was first sent to Harrow, where he took part in a great rebellion that had wellnigh proved fatal to the school. This occasioned his expulsion, and he then went to Eton, where he was distinguished above all the youths of his time. When Dr. Goodall, his contemporary and afterwards Head Master, was examined in 1818 before the Education Committee of the House of Commons respecting the alleged passing over of Porson in giving promotion to King's College, he at once declared that the celebrated Grecian was not by any means at the head of the Etonians of his day, and on being asked by me (as chairman) to name his superior, he at once said Lord Wellesley.² Some of his verses in the *Musæ Etonenses* have great merit, both as examples of pure Latinity and poetical talent. The lines on Bedlam, especially, are of distinguished excellence. At Christ Church, whither he went from Eton, and where he studied under Dr. W. Jackson (afterwards Bishop of Oxford), he continued successfully engaged in classical studies, and his poem on the death of Captain Cook showed how entirely he had kept up his school-reputation. It justly gained the University prize. In his riper years he retained the same classical taste which had been created at school and nurtured at college. At no time of his life does it appear that he abandoned these literary pursuits, so well fitted to be the recreation of a mind like his. On the eve of his departure for the East he wrote, at Mr. Pitt's desire, those beautiful verses on French conquest, which were first published in the 'Anti-Jacobin,' and of which the present Lord Carlisle, a most finished scholar and a man of true poetical genius, gave a translation of peculiar felicity. Nor did the same taste and the same power of happy and easy versification quit him in his old age. As late as a few weeks before his death he amused himself with Latin verses, was constant in reading the Greek orators and poets, and corresponded with the Bishop of Durham upon a favourite project which he had formed of learning Hebrew, that he might be able to relish the beauties of the Sacred writings, particularly the Psalmody, an object of much admiration with him. His exquisite lines³ on the

¹ It is related of Lady Mornington, that on a crowd pressing round and obstructing her carriage when on a visit to the House late in her life, she said to Lord Cowley, who accompanied her, "So much for the honour of being mother of the Gracchi!"

² Some one of the Committee would have had this struck out of the evidence, as not bearing upon the matter of the Inquiry, the Abuse of Charities; but the general voice was immediately pronounced in favour of retaining it, as a small tribute of respect to Lord Wellesley, and I know that he highly valued this tribute.

³ *Saltæ Babylonica*,

' Babylonian Willow, transplanted from the Euphrates a hundred years ago,' were suggested by the delight he took in the 137th Psalm, the most affecting and beautiful of the inspired king's whole poetry. This fine piece was the production of his eightieth year.

At Oxford he formed with Lord Grenville a friendship which continued during their lives, and led to his intimacy with Lord Grenville's great kinsman, Mr. Pitt, upon their entering into public life. That amiable man was sure to set its right value upon a heart so gentle, a spirit so high, and accomplishments so brilliant as Lord Wellesley's; but it is perhaps one of the most striking proofs which can be given of the fearless confidence reposed by the young minister in his own resources, that at a time when the phalanx of opposition was marshalled and led by no less men than Fox, Burke, Windham, and Sheridan, and when he had not a single cabinet colleague ever heard in debate, nor indeed any auxiliary at all save Lord Melville, he never should have deemed it worth his while to promote Lord Wellesley, whose powers as a speaker were of a high order, and with whom he lived on the most intimate footing. The trifling place of a puisne Lord of the Treasury and a member of the India Board formed all the preferment which he received before his appointment as Governor-General of India, although that important nomination sufficiently shows the high estimate which Mr. Pitt had formed of his capacity.

In the Lords' House of the Irish Parliament Lord Wellesley (then Lord Mornington) first showed those great powers, which a more assiduous devotion to the rhetorical art would certainly have ripened into an oratory of the highest order. For he was thoroughly imbued with the eloquence of ancient Greece and Rome, his pure taste greatly preferring, of course, the former. The object of his study, however, had been principally the four great orations (on the Crown and the Embassy); and I wondered to find him in his latter years so completely the master of all the passages in these perfect models, and this before the year 1839, when he began again to read over more than once the Homeric poems and the orations of Demosthenes. I spent much time with him in examining and comparing the various parts of those divine works, in estimating their relative excellence, and in discussing the connexion of the great passages and of the argument with the plan of each oration. But I recollect also being surprised to find that he had so much neglected the lesser orations; and that, dazzled as it were with the work, which is no doubt incomparably superior to all others as a whole, he not only for some time would not allow his full share of praise to Æschines, whose oration against Ctesiphon is truly magnificent, all but the end of the peroration, and whose oration on the Embassy excels that of his illustrious rival—but that he really had never opened his eyes to the extraordinary beauties of the Philippics, without fully studying which I conceive no one can have an adequate idea of the perfection of Demosthenean

eloquence, there being some passages of fierce and indignant invective more terrible in those speeches than any that are to be found in the Ctesiphon itself. Of this opinion was Lord Wellesley himself ultimately; and I believe he derived fully more pleasure of late years than he had ever done before from his readings of those grand productions.

Upon this admirable foundation, and with the pure and chastened taste which he thus had to direct his efforts, he could well erect a fine superstructure. For he had a fervent animation, a great poetic force, a mind full of sensibilities, a nature warm and affectionate; and the clearness of his understanding enabled him both to state facts and to employ arguments with entire success to a refined audience: in the proceedings of none other did he ever take a part. His powers of composition were great; and he adopted the true method of acquiring the faculty of debating, as well as of excelling in oratory,—he studied his speeches carefully, and frequently committed his thoughts to writing. But he had no mean talent for declamation. In the Irish Parliament he attached himself to the party of Mr. Grattan, then in the midst of his glorious struggle for the independence of his country. That great man quickly estimated his value; and remained affectionately attached to him through life, although they were thrown afterward into opposite parties. On removing to England he became a member of our House of Commons, where he was uniformly connected with Mr. Pitt, by private friendship as well as similarity of opinions; and when the French Revolution, and the principles propagated by it in this country, threatened the subversion of our mixed government, and the trial of the most perilous of all experiments, a pure democracy in a country unprepared for self-government, the talents of Lord Wellesley shone forth in a powerful resistance to the menacing torrent.

The great speech which he delivered in January, 1794, upon the enormities of the French Revolution, and the impossibility of making peace with their authors and directors, made an extraordinary impression at the time. It was, indeed, the most striking and masterly exposition which had ever been presented of the subject; and it went so elaborately into the details of the whole case, that the attacks made by his opponents consisted mainly of likening it to a treatise or a book. The value of such a piece is to be estimated by regarding it as a whole, and not by particular passages. It has the highest merit as a luminous and impressive statement, accompanied by sound reasoning on the facts disclosed, and animated appeals to the feelings they were calculated to excite. The texture of the whole is artistly woven; and the transitions are happy and natural. To give any samples of such qualities would manifestly be impossible. But the peroration may be read with admiration:—

“All the circumstances of your situation are now before you. You are now to make your option; you are now to decide whether

it best becomes the dignity, the wisdom, and the spirit of a great nation, to rely for her existence on the arbitrary will of a restless and implacable enemy, or on her own sword. You are now to decide whether you will entrust to the valour and skill of British fleets and British armies, to the approved faith and united strength of your numerous and powerful allies, the defence of the limited monarchy of these realms, of the constitution of parliament, of all the established ranks and orders of society among us, of the sacred rights of property, and of the whole frame of our laws, our liberties, and our religion ; or whether you will deliver over the guardianship of all these blessings to the justice of Cambon, the plunderer of the Netherlands, who, to sustain the baseless fabric of his depreciated assignats, defrauds whole nations of their rights of property, and mortgages the aggregate wealth of Europe ;—to the moderation of Danton, who first promulgated that unknown law of nature which ordains that the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Ocean, and the Rhine should be the only boundaries of the French dominions ;—to the religion of Robespierre, whose practice of piety is the murder of his own sovereign, who exhorts all mankind to embrace the same faith, and to assassinate their kings for the honour of God ;—to the friendship of Barrère, who avows in the face of all Europe that the fundamental article of the revolutionary government of France is the ruin and annihilation of the British empire ;—or, finally, to whatever may be the accidental caprice of any new band of malefactors, who, in the last convulsions of their exhausted country, may be destined to drag the present tyrants to their own scaffolds, to seize their lawless power, to emulate the depravity of their example, and to rival the enormity of their crimes.”

It is, however, not as an orator that this eminent person must be regarded ; for, before he had attained the height which he was destined to reach in Parliament, he was sent out to govern our Indian dominions. His administration of that great empire, unparalleled in history, the wisdom of his councils, his promptitude of execution, his rare combination of the highest qualities of the statesman, whether in peace or war, the “ *consulto* ” united with the “ *mature facto*,” and the brilliant success which crowned all his operations, furnish not merely matter of interesting reflection, but of most useful instruction to all succeeding rulers. Nor can anything be more fortunate than the access which the publication of his ‘Despatches’ has given to the whole conduct of his splendid administration. It becomes, therefore, a duty of the historian who would record its annals to dwell somewhat in detail upon these things, for the sake of the valuable lessons which a study of them is fitted to impart. To this we shall now proceed ; and it is an additional inducement to the work, that we thus shall have an opportunity of nearly observing

¹ “ *Nam primum opus est consulto ; et ubi consuleris, opus est mature facto.* ”
—SALLUST.

the character and conduct of by far the most considerable of the statesmen whom the East has in modern times produced, Tippoo Sultan.

It is necessary that we should first of all examine the position of the British power in India with respect to its neighbours, or, what amounts to nearly the same thing, the force with which it had to cope, and by which it might expect to be assailed; in a word, the balance of power in the peninsula when Lord Wellesley assumed the government. We must therefore begin by shortly considering in what state the events of 1791 and 1792 had left it.

The general outline of Indian affairs is sufficiently familiar to most readers. Whether for good or for evil to this country men have doubted, and may still dispute — whether for good or for evil to the natives of India, now that the exaggerations of oratory and the distortions of party ingenuity have been forgotten, no man of ordinary understanding can call in question — a footing had been at first slowly acquired, afterwards rapidly extended, by Great Britain in the Indian peninsula, and was maintained by a small numerical force of our countrymen, but with the consent, at least the entire submission, of a vast body of the natives, and with the concurrence and the help of many native powers, whose hostility among themselves we had turned to our advantage with great skill, and with pretty uniform success. It had long ceased to be a question whether or not this empire could be abandoned. Humanity towards our native subjects and our allies, as well as justice towards our own countrymen, forbade all thoughts of that description, even at times when there seemed a very general impression among our rival statesmen that the East Indian patronage was productive of such peril to the constitution of the government at home, and the whole subject of Indian affairs beset with such inextricable difficulties, as justified a wish that we had never set foot on the banks of the Ganges. To continue in the same position, and to abstain from all extension of a dominion already enormous, was therefore the only kind of moderation to which recourse could be had; and it is hardly necessary to observe, that even this was a resolve much easier to make than to keep by. For, suppose ever so fixed a purpose to be entertained, that no consideration should tempt us to increase our dominions, no man could maintain such a resolution inflexibly in all circumstances, and indeed least of all in the very event most likely to happen, namely, of some neighbouring state, greatly increasing its force, attacking us, or overpowering our allies, or even only menacing us, and endangering our existence, should no measures be adopted of a counteracting tendency. In truth, we had gotten into a position from which, as it was impossible to retire, so was it not by any means within our own power to determine whether we should stand still in it or advance; and it might happen that the only choice was a total abandonment of our dominion, or an extension of its

boundaries. No doubt such an argument as this is liable to great abuse; it has often been employed to justify acts of glaring national wrong. But every thing depends upon the circumstances in which it is urged, and the particulars of the case to which it is applied. Nor is it now stated with any reference to Lord Wellesley's proceedings in 1798 and 1799; these rest upon wholly different grounds. The present purpose is to explain the conduct of Lord Cornwallis ten years before; and it can hardly be denied that he was left without a choice as to the course he should take, and that the war and the treaty which closed it were rather to be regarded as necessary measures of self-defence, than acts of aggression and of conquest. That they were so considered, that they were defended upon this ground there can be no doubt; for although reference was made to the attacks by Tippoo upon our ally the Rajah of Travancore, it is quite clear that this alone did not justify the course which we pursued. The first attack had been repulsed: Tippoo had not repudiated our interference, but, on the contrary, had set up a claim of right, grounded on what we ourselves distinctly admitted to be a gross misconduct of the Rajah; and, before the second attack, the Rajah had, in fact, become the aggressor, by invading the Mysore camp. Besides, if our whole object was to defend our ally, the success which early attended our operations had enabled us to attain that end with ease; and we derived no right from any such consideration to continue the war, as we did, for three years, refusing all offers of the enemy, and only consenting to make peace under the walls of his capital upon the terms of his giving up one-half of his dominions. But the true defence of our proceedings, and that which was by no means kept back at the time, was the dangerous policy of the enemy — the resources at his command, and which he had showed in the clearest manner a fixed determination to use, first against our allies, and then against ourselves — the imminent hazard to which our existence in the East was exposed as long as such power remained in the hands of a chief bent upon using it to our destruction. Indeed, the principal ground of complaint against the war was much less its injustice than its impolicy; the view taken of our interest in those parts being that which, twenty years before (in 1770), had been sanctioned by the authority of some of the local governments, namely, the expediency of acting with the Sultan of Mysore against the Mahrattas, and regarding the latter as the more formidable adversary; a view which may fairly be said to have become as obsolete in 1790, and as ill suited to the altered circumstances of the times, as the policy of Queen Elizabeth with respect to the Spanish crown would have been at the same period in the management of our European concerns.

We may remark further upon that war, the strong testimony in its favour derived from the bare fact of Lord Cornwallis having been its promoter. The justly venerated name of that prudent and

virtuous statesman affords a kind of security for the integrity, and, above all, for the moderation of any line of conduct which had the sanction of his adoption. His Indian administration, so far from having ever been deemed any exception to his well-established character, was admitted by politicians of all classes, at a time when party ran highest upon the affairs of the East, to have been so exemplary, that his last appointment, in 1805, to be Governor-general was the source of universal contentment in England, as well as India; and his loss, which so soon followed, was by all parties regarded as a great public calamity. When it is considered that such was the deliberate and unanimous opinion of our statesmen regarding the course formerly pursued by this excellent person, after so long a time had been given for reflection, and such ample opportunity afforded of learning lessons from experience, and, above all, when this opinion was entertained at the very moment that the controversy raged the most vehemently upon the more recent measures of Lord Wellesley, there seems no escaping the conclusion that an unhesitating judgment was pronounced in favour of the policy pursued in 1789 and the two following years; and for the reasons already referred to, this judgment could only be rested upon the necessities of our situation in the East, with relation to the Mysore, its ruler, and our allies.

The peculiar circumstances which made Tippoo so formidable a neighbour are known to most readers. He ruled with absolute power over a highly fertile and populous country, of near two hundred thousand square miles in extent; from whence he raised a revenue of five millions sterling a-year, and an army of 150,000 men; and although the latter were very inferior in effective force to European troops, the revenue was equal to thrice as much in this country; and it was accumulating yearly in a treasure ready for the emergencies of war, while his soldiers were rapidly improving in discipline, and becoming every day more fit to meet ours upon equal terms. To his artillery he had given the greatest attention, and he had so formed his corps of gunners and elephants, that he could move a train of a hundred guns to any point with a rapidity unequalled in those countries by any other power. To these great elements of strength must be added the daring, subtle, and politic nature of the man, one of the most remarkable that have appeared in modern times. His ferocious tyranny to his own subjects; his cruel delight in religious persecution, which increased his power with the other bigots of his own persuasion; his inextinguishable hatred of the English, whom he had from his cradle been taught to regard as the implacable enemies of his family—these, though they undoubtedly form dark features in his character, augmented rather than lessened his influence in the peninsula, and made him an object of terror to all, whom admiration of his better qualities—his valour, perseverance, address, and patriotism—might fail to capti-

vate. Although his fierce Mussulman zeal alienated him from all Christian nations, yet did his still fiercer animosity against the English so far conquer or assuage his fanaticism as to make him court whatever power was hostile to our interests; and accordingly his constant endeavour was to gain the friendship and co-operation of France, from which he expected to derive the means of working our overthrow, and indeed of exterminating the British name in the East. In 1787 he had sent a great embassy to Paris, with the view of forming an alliance for offensive purposes; and one of the ministers of Louis XVI. (Bertrand de Molleville) has declared that a most tempting proposal was made to the servants of that unfortunate prince in 1791, with great secrecy, and which they were disposed to receive favourably; but that Louis regretted too much the consequences of his former interference in our colonial affairs, and was then too bitterly reaping the fruits of it, to embark again in similar enterprises, even supposing that the internal state of his dominions had left him the option.

There can, I conceive, be no manner of doubt that the war of 1789 with this powerful and implacable enemy, though it effected a mighty diminution of his strength, yet left him more rancorous than ever in his hatred, and sufficiently strong to be regarded still as by far our most formidable neighbour. The cession of half his territories to the Company and its allies, the Nizam and the Mahrattas, had been extorted from him by main force, when many of his principal fortresses were taken, his capital closely invested, and an assault impending, the issue of which the preceding successes of our troops before the place made no longer doubtful. Yet so bitter was the cup then held to his lips, that even in his extremity he flew back from it, broke off the treaty, after two of his three eldest sons had been given into our hand as hostages, and prepared for a last effort of desperate resistance—when, finding that it was too late—that our position made the fall of Seringapatam inevitable, and that his utter destruction was the certain consequence of further refusal, he agreed to whatever was demanded, and, in the uttermost bitterness of spirit, suddenly signed the treaty. Such a personage, in such a frame of mind, though stripped of half his dominions, was very certain to turn the remainder into means of more persevering annoyance, and only to desire life that he might, on some future day, slake his thirst of vengeance. The country which he retained was full of strong places, and bordered upon our dominions in the Carnatic by so many passes that Madras could hardly ever be reckoned secure from his attack. His territory was centrally situated, between our settlements upon the two coasts, so as to command the line that joined them. He still possessed his capital, a place of prodigious strength, and which he could again fortify as he had done before. His despotic power placed the whole resources of a rich country at his absolute disposal, and the six years that

followed the peace of Seringapatam were actively employed in preparing for that revenge which, ever since the disasters of 1792, had been burning in his breast. This is what might naturally have been expected, and it was certainly found to have taken place. But the course of events had still further favoured his designs. The dissensions among the other native princes, and rebellions in the dominions of some, had greatly reduced their strength, while his kingdom had enjoyed a profound peace; and, unfortunately for the English interest, our chief ally, the Nizam, had been so much reduced in his strength and reputation by a disastrous war with the Peishwah, and by a very disgraceful peace which he had been compelled to make, that, as regarded our relative position, the Mysore might be almost said to have gained whatever had been lost to the Deccan. The state of affairs in France, too, had materially changed. There was no longer the same indisposition to engage in schemes of Indian aggression; and, although our superiority at sea made the arrival of French auxiliaries extremely difficult, it clearly appears that before the expedition to Egypt, and independently of any hopes which he might build upon its successful issue, or upon the permanent establishment of the French in that country, Tippoo had entered into communication with the government of the Mauritius, for the purpose of furthering his favourite design of obtaining their assistance to revenge himself upon the English settlements. The resort of French officers to his service had long placed at his disposal able engineers, as well as other military men: and his troops never were in so high a state of discipline, nor his army so well appointed in all respects.

But it was not merely in his own dominions that he had important help to expect from his French connexions. Other native princes had adopted the same policy, and our ally, the Nizam, more than any. He had a corps of 1500 men under M. Raymond, a French commander, in the war of 1789, and this had since been increased to above 10,000, the officers of which were almost all French, and partook of the exasperation which unhappily at that time prevailed between the two countries—using every endeavour to undermine our influence at Hyderabad, and so little to be relied on in case of their services being required against Tippoo, that he might rather reckon upon them as friends than prepare to meet their hostility. Some alarm had been felt upon this head in the campaign of 1792; and although at that time the corps of Raymond was comparatively insignificant in amount, it had nevertheless been deemed, even then, necessary to make the Nizam take into his pay two other corps, one under an Irish, the other under an American officer, to serve as counterpoises to the French, upon the supposition that in the latter Tippoo had a natural ally. In 1798, the Irishman's battalion remained at Hyderabad, but numbered no more than 800 men; the American's had been disbanded, and had passed into the service of the Mahrattas; Raymond's,

which had increased so much that it formed the bulk of the Nizam's army, was ordered by him to be still further reinforced, and carried to 14,000. It was recruited, in the proportion of a third of its number, from our territories in the Carnatic, and by desertion from our regiments; no pains were spared by its officers in promoting this spirit whenever its detachments were near the Madras frontier; and a constant correspondence was maintained by it with the French troops in Mysore. Its influence on the court of Hyderabad was so great as to alarm that minister of the Nizam who was more than the rest in the interest of England. Finally, Tippoo looked to an invasion of our northern provinces, and those of our Mahratta allies, by Zemaun Shah, the sovereign of Caubul, with whom he had opened a communication; and who had recently succeeded, with but little opposition, in penetrating as far as Lahore, where he was stopped by some dissensions having broken out in his own dominions. The state of our affairs in Oude rendered that province a source of weakness, and compelled us to maintain an extraordinary force there. The Mahrattas had been extremely weakened by quarrels among themselves; and their chief state that under the Peishwah, had been so crippled by a succession of internal revolutions, that in the event of aid being required against Mysore, little prospect was held out of any effectual co-operation from this quarter; while there, as in every court of India, the intrigues of Tippoo had been unremittingly employed to undermine our influence, and to stir up direct hostility against us.

It was in this state of affairs that Lord Wellesley assumed the government of India. He arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, on his way out, in February, 1798. He deemed it expedient to open the India House despatches, which he met on their passage to Europe; and he found at the Cape, by a fortunate accident, Major Kirkpatrick, a gentleman of great experience and ability, and who had been the British resident both at the court of the Nizam and of Scindiah. The information which Lord Wellesley received regarding the state of Indian politics from him, and from the despatches, appears to have immediately laid the foundation of the opinions which he acted upon throughout the difficult crisis that ensued. Indeed, there is nothing more remarkable in these transactions than the statements which he transmitted from the Cape. He evidently had there made up his mind upon the line of policy which it was fitting to pursue, in order to restore the British influence among the native powers, to emancipate our allies there from French influence, and to place them in circumstances that might enable them to maintain their independence and fulfil their engagements with us. The first and most important of his operations when he arrived in India—the one, indeed, which enabled him to attempt all the rest—was the reduction of the corps of Raymond; and we find in the despatches from the Cape a very

distinct statement of the necessity of this operation, and of his determination to substitute for Raymond's corps an additional British force, and resolutely to prevent its increase until that substitution could be enforced. The general outline of the policy which he afterwards pursued with respect to other powers is also very plainly sketched in these memorable despatches from the Cape; and as far as regarded Tippoo, although at the time no information had reached Lord Wellesley or the Government of any acts of hostility, or even of any preparations for a rupture, the course of conduct fit to be held with respect to him is pointed out distinctly.—“My ideas on this subject,” says his Lordship, “are, that as on the one hand we ought *never to use any high language towards Tippoo, nor ever attempt to deny him the smallest point of his just rights*, so, on the other, where we have distinct proofs of his machinations against us, we ought to let him know that his treachery does not escape our observation, and to make him feel that he is within the reach of our vigilance. At present it appears to me that he is permitted to excite ill-will against us wherever he pleases, without the least attempt on our part to reprehend either him for the suggestion, or the Court, to whom he applies, for listening to it.”¹

Lord Wellesley proceeded from the Cape to Madras, where he remained some weeks, in order to superintend the execution of the measures directed to be pursued with respect to a change in the sovereignty of Tanjore. But it subsequently appears that this visit was of material use in giving him an accurate view of the character, talents, and dispositions of the principal persons concerned in the government of that presidency. There are few more striking documents among his despatches than the letter containing an account of these persons, which he sent to Lord Clive (now Lord Powis), the new governor, soon after his arrival; and there can be no doubt that Lord Wellesley's personal observation of the individuals enabled him at once to detect the quarter from whence an attempt afterwards proceeded to thwart his designs, and to counteract and to frustrate that attempt. Having incidentally adverted to this topic, it is fit that justice should be rendered to the conduct of the two principal persons at the station—Lord Clive and General Harris. No one can rise from a perusal of the Indian correspondence without forming a very high opinion of the admirable good sense, and steady resolution to sacrifice all private feelings to the interests of the service, which guided the whole conduct, both of the governor and commander-in-chief. Both of them appear at once to have felt and

¹ It is a remarkable, and I believe an unexampled circumstance, showing how accurately Lord Wellesley's opinions and plans were formed, that whole pages of his Minute, 12th August, at Calcutta, explaining his views, after they were perfected by a six months' residence in the country, are taken from the letters written by him at the Cape in February!

obeyed the influence of a superior mind when the plans of Lord Wellesley were unfolded to them. His firmness, indeed, his confidence in his own resources, and his determination to carry through his own measures, were tempered on all occasions by the greatest urbanity and kindness of demeanour towards those coadjutors. Nevertheless, persons of less good sense, and less devoted to the discharge of their duty, would have been apt to make difficulties upon occasions when serious hazards were to be encountered, and men of a mean disposition, and a contracted understanding, would not have failed to play the part in which such persons commonly excel, prompted by envy, or even a preposterous jealousy, where the utter absence of all equality makes it ridiculous—that of carping, and complaining, and repining, and creating difficulties; whereas those able and useful servants of the state showed as much zeal in executing the Governor-General's plan as if all his measures had been their own.

About the beginning of June, soon after his arrival at Calcutta, Lord Wellesley received intelligence of a proclamation having been issued at the Mauritius by General Malartic, the French governor, with a copy of that document. In the course of a fortnight its authenticity was proved beyond all doubt; and its importance was unquestionable. It announced the arrival of ambassadors from Tippoo; the offer to the Executive Directory of an alliance, offensive and defensive, against the English power; the demand of assistance; and the engagement of Tippoo to declare war as soon as it should arrive, for the purpose of expelling us from India; and it called upon the inhabitants of the colony to form a force, which should be transported to Mysore, and taken into the Sultan's service. It was ascertained that the ambassadors had given the most positive assurances in their master's name of his determination to act as the proclamation stated—had obtained the aid of a certain considerable number of French officers and men—had returned with these in a French ship of war—and had presented them to Tippoo, who immediately took them into his service, having also received the ambassadors on their arrival with marks of distinction. His army was known to be on the footing of a war-establishment; that is to say, it was constantly in the field, excepting in the monsoon season, and amounted to between 70,000 and 80,000 men, beside a numerous and well-appointed artillery; and the discipline of the infantry, in particular, had been of late very carefully improved. His treachery, exceeding even the measure of perfidy proverbially common to Eastern courts, had been displayed in the letters sent to the Government at Calcutta, both before Lord Wellesley's arrival, and also to himself, some of them on the very day when proceedings were taken in the negotiations with France. His intrigues with the native courts, and with Zemaun Shah, had likewise been discovered; and all pointed to the same object—the attack of our settle-

ments the moment he was ready and saw any prospect of success.

In these circumstances Lord Wellesley's determination was immediately taken, to attack him without delay, unless he gave such ample security as should preclude all risk from his aggression when his plans were matured, and he received the further assistance which he expected—security which there was little, if any, reason to suppose he would agree to, after the agonies he had experienced from his losses in the last war. The plan which his Lordship had formed, in the event of hostilities, was to seize the Sultan's portion of the Malabar coast, by marching one army from Bombay; to move another force from the Carnatic upon Seringapatam; and thus compel him, both to give up that part of his dominions which enabled him to maintain his intercourse with France, and to dismiss all French officers and men from his service, to receive residents from us and from our allies, which he had, for obvious reasons, uniformly persisted in refusing, and to defray the expenses of the war. But upon examining the condition of the Company's resources, both military and financial, it was found quite impossible to undertake these operations so as to finish the war in one campaign. The Bombay establishment might, though with difficulty, have been able to bear its share of them; but that of Madras, on which the greater movement depended, was so crippled as to make it impossible for a sufficient force to march upon Seringapatam. Of ultimate success Lord Wellesley entertained no doubt; but he wisely judged that it would be unjustifiable in every view to undertake a war which could not, to a reasonable certainty, be finished within the season.

And now let me claim the reader's best attention, while I endeavour to lay before him a sketch of that admirable combination of means by which the whole plan was not only successfully executed the next year, but by which its success appears to have been rendered as nearly a matter of absolute certainty as any thing in politics and in war can be. It will be seen that the designs of Tippoo were met and counteracted, and even the possibilities of his defeating our schemes were prevented by the adoption of a systematic course of policy in almost every quarter of India, in the native courts as well as in our own settlements; that he was, as it were, surrounded in all directions, so as to cut off each chance of escape; that he was guarded against in every avenue by which he might assail us, so as to be deprived of all means of offence; that wherever he turned to intrigue against us, there he found our agents on the watch, and our influence fortified—wherever common interests or common feelings gave him a prospect of succour, there a watchful and provident care had neutralized those natural advantages—wherever actual hostility to us had made ready for him some coadjutor, there a timely vigour, there a clear perception of the end, a determined will in choosing the means, and the prompt and unflinching use

of them, paralysed his expected ally, if it failed to make him an enemy.

And first of all, in order to estimate the merits of the policy which we are going to survey, it is requisite that a clear idea be formed of the object in view. It was to reduce the Sultan's power, by taking advantage next year of the cause of war already given by him, unless he could be made, in the mean time, to give the satisfaction and security required. But the army on the Madras establishment was incapable of defending that territory, much more of acting against Mysore. The funded debt of the Company had trebled within a few years, and their credit was so low, that eight per cent. paper was at a discount of eighteen and twenty per cent.; and even twelve per cent. paper at a discount of four. The Nizam and the Peishwah were our two allies, bound to act with us against the Sultan. But the former, as we have seen, was reduced to a state almost of insignificance, and was in the hands of a military force favourable to Tippoo. The latter was still more crippled, and had a victorious rival in possession of the chief part of his territory, with an army which had subdued him. We allude to Scindiah, who had for a considerable time left his own country, situated in the north, between the Jumna and the Nerbudda, and taken post at Poonah, the Peishwah's capital. Then it became part of Lord Wellesley's object, and without which the rest must fail, to restore those two powers to independence, and make the aid of one, if not both, available to us, while neither should be suffered to act against us. Again, Scindiah himself was accessible to Tippoo's arts, and over him some check must be provided. It was indeed found that both he and the Peishwah were secretly hostile to us; and Scindiah, in particular, was in negotiation with the deposed Nabob of Oude, to overthrow our influence in the north, by restoring that prince, and dethroning the Nabob Vizir, whom we had raised to the throne. Next, there was the threatened invasion of Zemaun Shah, who had prepared to cross the Attock, and was within six weeks' march of Delhi, maintaining by correspondence a friendly intercourse with Tippoo, and little likely to be opposed either by the Seiks or the Mahrattas. It became necessary, therefore, to secure the north against this double danger, both from the Shah and from Scindiah; from the former, if Scindiah remained in the Deccan, abandoning his own dominions to the invader; from the latter, if the Shah either retreated or was repulsed by the Mahratta power. Add to all these difficulties, that which appears to have greatly disconcerted Lord Wellesley at one moment, the prevailing despondency of leading men at Madras, who had formed so exaggerated an estimate of the danger attending a rupture with Mysore, through a recollection of what the Carnatic had formerly suffered from its proximity to the enemy, and had so lively a feeling of the weakness of their present establishment, that they arrived at a very singular and

unfortunate opinion. They maintained that no preparation, even of a prospective nature—no increase, even of the means of defence—should be attempted, because no activity of exertion could enable them to resist the enemy, and any appearance of arming would only draw down upon them an immediate invasion.

Lord Wellesley's first proceeding was to put down with a strong hand the resistance which he met with on the part of those who held this extraordinary doctrine, and whose argument, as he most justly showed, against the prudence of preparing for defence, would become stronger every day as Tippoo's hostile preparations advanced, until at length we should be reduced to the alternative either of implicit submission, or of being destroyed when and how the Sultan pleased. He therefore directed the army to be assembled in the Carnatic without delay; he showed in what consisted the want of efficiency complained of, and applied the remedy, by giving directions to alter the system of supplying draught cattle; he directed the proper stores for a campaign to be prepared and established on the Mysore frontier; he made the European troops be moved to garrisons in the same quarter, while the native forces should be collected in the field, and ready to act in case of invasion; and he despatched a supply of specie from Bengal, together with such force of soldiers and marines as could be immediately spared. The resistance offered at Madras was met with temper, but with perfect firmness, by the Governor in Council at Calcutta.—“If,” say they, after referring to the remonstrances of the Council at Madras, “if we thought it proper to enter with you into any discussions of the policy of our late orders, we might refer you to the records of your own government, which furnish more than one example of the fatal consequences of neglecting to keep pace with the forwardness of the enemy's equipments, and of resting the defence of the Carnatic, in such a crisis as the present, on any other security than a state of early and active preparation for war. *But being resolved to exclude all such discussions from the correspondence of the two governments,* we shall only repeat our confidence in your zealous and speedy execution of those parts of the public service which fall within the direct line of your peculiar duty.”

Lord Wellesley, while this correspondence proceeded, had carried on the operation of most importance in his foreign policy—the restoring and improving our relations with the Nizam and the Peishwah. Nothing could be more signal than the success of this policy as regarded the Nizam, and it proved the hinge upon which all his subsequent measures turned. By negotiations with that prince and his minister, admirably planned, and ably conducted through Captain Kirkpatrick, a treaty was concluded for increasing the English subsidiary force, and disbanding the corps formerly commanded by Raymond, and since his death (which had lately happened) by Piron. It was part of this treaty that the French officers and men should be

sent to Europe by the Company, and that no Frenchman should again be taken into the Nizam's service. But the consent of the corps itself was to be obtained, and it is needless to add, that his Lordship's design was to have that without asking for it. Accordingly, while the negotiation was going on, the additional subsidiary force of three thousand men was moved to the Guntoor Circar, a portion of the Deccan ceded to the Company in 1778, and which lies near to Hyderabad, the capital of the Nizam. This force, as soon as the treaty was signed, marched to Hyderabad, and was joined by two thousand of the Nizam's cavalry. A mutiny having broken out in the French corps, advantage was judiciously taken of this to surround and disarm it, which was effected without any bloodshed. The greatest courtesy and kindness was shown towards the officers, who were immediately embarked with all their property (their arrears of pay having been settled through the intervention of the English resident), and sent first to Calcutta, and afterwards to France, not being treated as prisoners of war. This most important proceeding at once gave a new aspect to our affairs in the peninsula. The Nizam was restored to independence, and became our firm friend; his power was materially increased; for Lord Wellesley's protection of him against the Peishwah and Scindiah, if it did not enable him to resume that station which he had lost since the war of 1795, yet gave him the means of effectually aiding the contemplated operations, and secured him from the possibility of becoming a prey either to Tippoo or his coadjutors. But the effect of the change at Hyderabad was not confined to the Deccan—it was felt all over India, and in our own settlements as well as at the native courts. The confidence in Lord Wellesley which it at once inspired, gave a vigour to his government which the mere possession of power never can bestow, especially where political as well as military operations are required; for absolute command may extort implicit obedience, but the exertion of men's faculties, their abilities as well as their courage, can only be fully secured by filling them with zealous devotion to their superior. The Governor-General had the choice of excellent agents among the able men educated in the Company's service; he pitched upon those who best deserved his confidence; he gave it them freely; and their entire reliance both upon his capacity and upon his support called forth their most strenuous exertions on every occasion.

It must certainly be ascribed chiefly to the change effected at Hyderabad, that he was enabled to prevent any unfavourable proceedings either on the Peishwah's part or on Scindiah's; for their intentions were of the most hostile nature.¹ The negotiations

¹ Considerable assistance was derived from a change in the ministry at Poonah, brought about mainly by our influence. But though Nana Furnavese, who was restored to power, was uniformly our friend, his master's disposition underwent no change; and after Lord Wellesley had peremptorily refused his proffered mediation, he was discovered to have taken measures for joining Tippoo, but they were, by

carried on with them for the purpose of preventing any junction with Tippoo, and maintaining peace between them and the Nizam, were successful. But Scindiah could not be prevailed upon to quit the Deccan and return to his own dominions; nor would the Peishwah so far break with Mysore as to dismiss the Sultan's ambassadors. The influence acquired at Hyderabad, and a force prepared at Bombay to assist either the Peishwah or Scindiah against the other, should hostilities break out between them, and to counteract both should they join against the Nizam, maintained the existing state of things until the disturbances in Scindiah's own country, and the discontents in the army he commanded, reduced his power to insignificance; and thus the whole military operations against Mysore were carried on ultimately without any interruption from either of those chiefs.

In addition to the holds over Scindiah, which have just been mentioned, the threatened invasion of Zemaun Shah afforded another. In order to protect the northern frontier, it became necessary to send a large force, under Sir J. Craig, into the field, which remained on the frontiers of Oude until the Shah retired from the Seik's country, which he had approached. This force was continued on the same line during the critical state of affairs in the south; and it had, no doubt, a powerful effect upon Scindiah, whose dominions lay exposed to it, had he made any hostile movement in the Deccan. The Rajah of Berar borders upon Scindiah on another line, the south-eastern side. Accordingly, negotiations were at the same time commenced with that prince, for the establishment of a defensive alliance, in case of Scindiah breaking the peace.

We thus perceive the great basis of the whole operations of Lord Wellesley. The Nizam was emancipated and became an efficient ally.—The Peishwah was secured either as an ally or a neutral by the change effected at Hyderabad, and a demonstration on the side of Bombay.—Scindiah, whose power was much more formidable at first than the Peishwah's, and who was not bound to us by the same obligations of treaty, was not merely kept in check by the same two holds which Lord Wellesley had over the Court of Poonah, but he was further restrained by the movements in Oude, on one of his frontiers, and the arrangements with Berar on another.

That no quarter of the peninsula might be neglected, and every security taken for the success of his operations against Mysore, Lord Wellesley sent a resident to the Rajah of Travancore, a prince of comparatively small power, but whose position on the south-western frontier of the Sultan made it expedient to obtain his co-operation, and at any rate to watch his proceedings. Material assistance was also to be derived from him in the important department of the conveyance of the two armies, as from Travancore the commu-

our demonstrations, referred to in the text, delayed until the fall of that tyrant approached too close to make any connection with him safe.

nication was equally easy with the Malabar and Coromandel coasts.

The arrangements which we have been examining were carried on at first from Calcutta, where the Governor-General remained until his measures had reached a certain point of maturity. But he wisely deemed it expedient, after this, to be upon the spot, that he might superintend the execution, which now approached, of his plan. Indeed, his departure from Calcutta might have been deferred some time longer, but for the experience which he had had of the resistance to him, among certain of the authorities at Madras. This had not been confined to the original order for assembling the army, already adverted to. His proceeding at Hyderabad had been very coldly seconded, and he even thought had been thwarted by the same parties; for when he directed the subsidiary force to be prepared, and sent into the Guntoor Circar—a movement upon which the whole depended—he was met by remonstrances, instead of being supported by zealous endeavours; and he complained of a delay which might have proved fatal in the execution of that order, and which did defer the successful issue of the plan. His Lordship's words, in writing to General Harris upon this subject, evinced at once his strong sense of the treatment he thought he had received, and his resolute determination to trample upon all opposition. This despatch also renders justice to that excellent officer, exempting him from all share in the blame:—"My letter of the 16th July will have informed you how essential a plan to the very existence of the British empire in India would have been defeated, if your honourable firmness had not overcome the suggestions of an opposition which would have persuaded you to violate the law, under the specious pretence of executing the spirit, but disobeying the letter of the orders of the Governor-General in Council. This opposition I am resolved to crush; I possess sufficient powers to do so; and I will exert those powers to the extreme point of their extent, rather than suffer the smallest particle of my plans for the public service to be frustrated by such unworthy means. With this view, my earnest request to you is that you will communicate to me, without delay, the names of those who have arrogated to themselves the power of governing the empire committed to my charge; the ignorance and weakness of this self-created government have already appeared to you from the papers which I transmitted to you on the 18th July."¹

¹ There can be, I conceive, no doubt, and very possibly, upon a calm review of the whole affair, the Governor-General may have had as little, that those persons acted conscientiously in the discharge of what they conceived to be their duty. That they had fallen into a grievous error in their view of the policy fit to be pursued, has been stated more than once in the text; but not only may we acquit them of all fault beyond error in judgment—we may go further—and hold that their duty required them, acting under that error, to express strongly their opinion. They were persons of great respectability, and long and varied experience in Indian affairs. This certainly only increased their influence, and augmented the difficulties of Lord Wellesley's position.

At the date of this letter, 19th August, the negotiations at Hyderabad had so far succeeded, mainly, no doubt, from the movement in the Guntoor Circar, as to show the short-sightedness of the opposition in question; but the great event of the disarming did not take place until two months more had elapsed. Lord Clive had now arrived at Madras, and he took the most steady and zealous part in seconding the Governor-General. Nevertheless, the existence of an opinion altogether unfavourable to Lord Wellesley's power among men in authority, and whose great experience was likely to render their opposition embarrassing during the *regni novitas* of Lord Clive, though it should fail to shake his purpose, rendered the personal presence of the Governor-General highly desirable; and he accordingly removed to Madras at the end of December, and there established the seat of government, leaving the affairs of Bengal to be administered in his absence by the Commander-in-chief Sir A. Clarke and the rest of the Council. But although his arrival at Madras had the effect, by law, of superseding Lord Clive, he most properly took the first opportunity of making a declaration, in the form of a minute in Council, that he should not interfere in any respect in the peculiar affairs of the presidency, or in anything relating to its patronage, civil or military; but should confine himself to the general interest of the empire, and act with regard to these as if he had continued at Calcutta.

The occupation of Egypt by the French, which had taken place during the preceding summer, and the communication which Lord Wellesley immediately foresaw would be established between Bonaparte and Tippoo (and subsequent events¹ proved that he had conjectured rightly), induced him to direct Admiral Rainier's fleet to watch the Malabar coast with great care, so that all assistance from the Red Sea should be cut off as far as a naval force could effect this object; and in case any armament escaped the vigilance of the cruisers, the precautions taken on the coast by land must be relied on, and especially the operation of the Bombay army.

When the Sultan perceived that on all sides preparations were in a forward state against him, and found every native court occupied by Lord Wellesley's agents, he appears to have felt considerable alarm, though he carefully dissembled it for some time. A town and district had been some time before Lord Wellesley's arrival occupied by the Company, called Wynaad; Tippoo had made representations against this; it appeared to have originated in mistake; the subject was examined, and Lord Wellesley at once ordered it to be restored, without any equivalent. Some other unimportant disputes were by both parties agreed to be terminated by an amicable inquiry. But Lord Wellesley took the opportunity

¹ Bonaparte's Letter to Tippoo was found some months afterwards on the taking of Seringapatam, with the other proofs of the Sultan's hostile proceedings.

of this correspondence, as soon as his preparations were sufficiently advanced, to inform Tippoo that he was quite aware of his hostile proceedings at the Mauritius and elsewhere; that his Lordship's preparations had been made to repel any aggression which might be attempted; but that both he and his allies, being desirous of peace, were only anxious to place their relations with the Sultan upon a safe and distinctly understood footing; and, in order that this might be arranged, he required Tippoo to receive an ambassador, whom he named. This only produced an evasive answer, giving a ridiculously false explanation of the intercourse with the Mauritius, and putting aside the proposal of an embassy, but expressing boundless delight at the defeat of the French fleet by Lord Nelson, which Lord Wellesley had communicated to him, and applying to that nation every epithet of hatred and contempt, although it is now clearly ascertained that his despair on receiving the news of their defeat knew no bounds. Again Lord Wellesley urged the receiving of an ambassador, and no direct answer could be obtained, while preparations were actively making to increase every branch of the Mysore army.

At length Lord Wellesley transmitted to him on the 9th of January (1799) a letter, recapitulating his whole conduct, and "once more calling upon him, in the most serious and solemn manner, to assent to the admission of Major Doveton" (the ambassador), and earnestly requiring an answer within a day after the letter should reach him. Still the crafty Sultan gave no answer, though he continued his preparations; and on the 7th of February he despatched a French officer as his ambassador to the Executive Directory, with a renewed proposition for an offensive and defensive alliance to make war jointly on the English, partition their territories, and expel them from India. At the same time with the despatch of this mission, he at length sent an answer, in which he said he was going upon a hunting excursion, and that Major Doveton might come to him, but unattended.

It was, however, now too late; for on the 3rd of February (the Sultan's letter not arriving before the 13th) Lord Wellesley had ordered the army to march upon Seringapatam, and commence the siege without delay. Late, however, as the Sultan's consent to treat had been, and manifestly as it was designed only to gain time for his military preparations, and, above all, to postpone our attack until the season for operations, already far advanced, should be gone, Lord Wellesley directed General Harris, under whose command the army had marched some days before the answer arrived, to receive any ambassador whom Tippoo might send, and to treat upon the basis of his securing the Company and its allies, by abandoning the coast of Malabar, dismissing his French troops, and receiving residents from the Company and the Nizam. The instructions given to General Harris were not confined to the terms of the

negotiation, but embraced the various contingencies which might happen, provided for almost every conceivable event, and only left that gallant and able officer his own proper province of leading on the army and superintending its operations. After the march was begun, and when on the eve of entering Mysore, the General received a final instruction of a most important description—he was on no account to conclude any treaty until a junction had been effected of the Madras and Bombay armies, and there was a fair prospect of successfully beginning the siege.

The General entered Mysore on the 5th March with an army said to be better equipped than any that had ever taken the field in the Peninsula, and amounting to about 22,000 men, of whom between 5000 and 6000, were Europeans, the rest natives. The Nizam's army, consisting of the English subsidiary force of 6000, and 16,000 of his own troops, had some weeks before been moved to the Carnatic, and joined General Harris at Vellore, before he entered Tippoo's territory. The Bombay army, of about 7000, moved upon Seringapatam, from the opposite quarter; and, although unexpected delays occurred during the march of the Madras army, occasioned chiefly by the failure of the cattle and the carriage department, in about four weeks the whole force reached Seringapatam, after encountering a comparatively slight opposition; one battle having been fought by each army—both, though successful, yet by no means decisive. It is well known that the Duke of Wellington, then Colonel Wellesley, commanded a brigade in this memorable expedition, and distinguished himself by that great military capacity which has since, on a far wider theatre, shone forth with such extraordinary lustre. He was also placed by his brother at the head of a commission, judiciously formed for the purpose of conducting, under General Harris's authority, and in constant communication with him as well as with the government, all political operations during the advance of the army, as well as during the siege, and after its successful termination.

Never, perhaps, was an operation more complete in all its parts than this brilliant campaign. In a month Seringapatam was taken; the Sultan falling while fighting in its defence with his wonted valour, now heightened by despair. All his chief captains submitted to the conquerors; and the Rajah of Mysore, whose family had been dethroned by the usurpation of Tippoo's father, and were detained captive, and subjected to every ignominious treatment by the cruel tyrants, was called to the throne of a portion of their former dominions, the rest being divided among the Company, the Nizam, and the Peishwah. There were found at Seringapatam papers confirming beyond a doubt the inferences respecting his hostile designs, drawn from Malartic's proclamation and the embassy to the Mauritius. But at the

same time the correspondence shows the deep perfidy which formed so remarkable a feature in the character of this Eastern tyrant. An inextinguishable hatred of England breathes through the whole, animates the mass, and mixes itself with the great body of the documents. This was plainly sincere. But his attachment to the French Directory may not have been quite so real, excepting in so far as they were the enemies of his foes. In addressing the "Citizens Representatives" he is ready to "acknowledge the sublimity of the new French Constitution," and he offers its chiefs "alliance and fraternity." But this does not prevent him from writing at the same time to the Grand Signor and testifying "his boundless satisfaction on learning that the Turk is about to free his regions (Egypt) from the contamination of those shameless tribes" (the French), or, from exhorting him, "by word and deed, to repel those abandoned infidels."

In surveying the operations of the war, however, and in comparing the Sultan's conduct of it with that of the campaigns in 1789, 90, and 91, we can hardly avoid being struck with the inferior vigour and resources displayed by him upon the present occasion. His troops were better disciplined; his own courage and theirs was as high as ever; nor was there any want of disposition to contest every inch of ground. Yet whether it be from the greatness of the force brought to bear upon him; or from his chagrin at having failed in his attempts to put off the invasion till the monsoon should set in; or from the discomfiture of all his plans to obtain the help of the native powers, and the disappointment of his hopes of French assistance—certain it is, that we see none of those rapid and daring movements which more than once, in the former contest, reduced our chances of victory to the possibility of escape, and made our final success appear any thing rather than a matter of certain calculation.

The conduct of the Mahratta war and of the expeditions against Scindiah and Holkar was marked by the same great capacity which had shone forth in the conquest of the Mysore. Those hostilities also offered an opportunity to the marquess's brother of displaying the transcendant talents which have since been exhibited with such surpassing lustre—the talents of a great statesman not less than of a great captain. But the part of Lord Wellesley's policy which chiefly excited opposition in England was the subsidiary treaties which he formed with several powerful princes, and by which the important dominions of Arcot, Oude, the Nizam, and the Peishwah were placed under a real subordination to the English government. The perfidies of the native princes, their disposition to league against our power with the view of expelling us from India, their inclination to court a French alliance in order to gain this their favourite object, ren-

dered it really unsafe to leave them in a state of entire independence. We had been compelled to interfere in their affairs and to regulate the succession to their thrones upon each successive discovery of designs hostile to us, nay, threatening our very existence, the subversion of all the fabric of useful and enlightened polity which we had erected on the ruins of their own barbarous system, and particularly the restriction of the cruel despotism under which the native millions had formerly groaned. On each successive occasion, therefore, of this description, Lord Wellesley compelled the government which he installed to make a perpetual treaty by which a stipulated force under our own command was to be maintained at the expense of the native power, and the control of all state affairs, save what related to the palace and the family of the nominal sovereign, was to be vested in the British resident. The fall of Tippoo Sultan did not more effectually consolidate our Indian empire and secure it against all future dangers than the Subsidiary System thus introduced and established.

Among the dissentients on these subjects was found the prevailing party in the East India Company's direction. Lord Wellesley at one time resigned his government in consequence of their support being withdrawn, and was only prevailed on to retain his position at a most critical period of Indian history by the earnest intercession of Mr. Pitt's government, who gave him, as did Lord Sidmouth with his characteristic courage, sagacity, and firmness, their steady support. Nothing, however, can be more satisfactory, nor anything more creditable to the Company, as well as to Lord Wellesley's administration, than the change of opinion manifested by that body towards the end of his life. An address was voted unanimously to him, upon the publication of his Despatches, in 1837, and it is fit that I extract its concluding passage: "To the eventful period of your Lordship's government the Court look back with feelings common to their countrymen; and, anxious that the minds of their servants should be enlarged by the instruction to be derived from the accumulated experience of eminent statesmen, they felt it a duty to diffuse widely the means of consulting a work unfolding the principles upon which the supremacy of Britain in India was successfully manifested and enlarged under a combination of circumstances in the highest degree critical and difficult." With this view a hundred copies of the Despatches were ordered to be sent to the different Presidencies in addition to those already transmitted, "as containing a fund of information of incalculable value to those actively engaged in the diplomatic, legislative, and military business of India."

A present of 20,000*l.* was also on this occasion voted to Lord

¹ Lord Wellesley always gratefully acknowledged the merits and services of Lord Sidmouth, to whom he had through life been much attached.

Wellesley. He had ever shown the entire disregard of money which with so few exceptions has always marked great men. But especially was this displayed on one memorable occasion. He had given up to the army engaged in the conquest of Mysore his share, amounting to 100,000*l.*, of the booty which came to be distributed. This munificent sacrifice is recited by the Company in the vote of the present as one of its grounds.

It was not to conquest and to negotiation that Lord Wellesley's government confined its attention. He applied the same enlarged views to the improvement of the service, and to bettering the condition of the countless millions under his rule. That the arts of peace occupied their due share of his attention we have abundant proof in the establishment of the Calcutta College, the promotion of scientific researches, especially into the natural history of the Peninsula, the opening the Indian commerce as far as the Company would allow, the aid given to missions, but under strict and necessary precaution of maintaining toleration, and avoiding all offence to the natives, and the suppression of sanguines, or human sacrifices. In the rigour of this act, so characteristic of the man, he was imitated by Lord William Bentinck, one of his ablest and best successors, whose peremptory ordinance at once put down the last remains of that abominable and bloody superstition, the suttees, or burning of widows on the graves of their husbands. In some of these measures, particularly those relating to the Calcutta College and the Indian trade, he was as much thwarted by the Honourable Company as in his foreign policy. But while that wary body denounced his measures as expensive to their treasury, they forgot to calculate how greatly that treasury had been increased by those very operations of which they always complained so bitterly. By his conquests, and his financial reforms, he had more than doubled their revenue, which from seven millions now reached fifteen. The spectacle of the sanctified Mrs. Coles's application to Mr. Loader's [bottle of brandy in Foote's farce, or her wishes to have a small consignment of nuns to make her fortune in a season, and then leave her only the care of her soul, is not more edifying than that of the Honourable Company, always protesting against adding a foot to their territory, and denouncing the policy which trebled it, while they quietly took possession, without a murmur, of the gains thus acquired, at once relieving their consciences by the murmurs, and replenishing their purse by the spoil.¹

Lord Wellesley returned from his glorious administration at a very critical period in our parliamentary history. Mr. Pitt was

¹ The detail into which I have entered on Lord Wellesley's Indian administration is due, not only to the importance of the subject, but to the authenticity of the materials. He himself examined the views which I had taken of this complicated subject, so little familiar to statesmen in this country; and he declared that they correctly represented his proceedings and his policy.

stricken with the malady which proved fatal—a typhus fever, caught from some accidental infection, when his system was reduced by the stomach complaints which he had long laboured under. He soon appointed a time when his friend might come to see him. This, their last interview, was in the villa on Putney Heath, where he died a few days after. Lord Wellesley called upon me there many years after; it was then occupied by my brother-in-law, Mr. Eden, whom I was visiting. His Lordship showed me the place where these illustrious friends sat. Mr. Pitt was, he said, much emaciated and enfeebled, but retained his gaiety and his constitutionally sanguine disposition; he expressed his confident hopes of recovery. In the adjoining room he lay a corpse the ensuing week; and it is a singular and a melancholy circumstance, resembling the stories told of William the Conqueror's deserted state at his decease, that some one in the neighbourhood having sent a message to inquire after Mr. Pitt's state, he found the wicket open, then the door of the house, and, nobody answering the bell, he walked through the rooms till he reached the bed on which the minister's body lay lifeless, the sole tenant of the mansion of which the doors a few hours before were darkened by crowds of suitors alike obsequious and importunate, the vultures whose instinct haunts the carcasses only of living ministers.

It can hardly be doubted that the party of Mr. Pitt would gladly have rallied under Lord Wellesley had there been among them a leader ready for the House of Commons. But to place Lord Castlereagh or Mr. Canning in the command of their forces against the combined power of Mr. Fox, and Messrs. Grey, Sheridan, and Windham, would have been courting signal defeat. A wiser course was chosen, and the King is said to have had early intelligence of Mr. Fox's days being numbered. He therefore waited patiently until the time came when he could obtain the great object of his wishes, a restoration of the Tory party. First, he wished to have excited the country against the Whigs upon the failure of the investigation into the Princess of Wales's conduct; for then he would have availed himself of the strong feelings of the English people against conjugal misconduct, and their dislike of the illustrious husband, an object of his royal father's constant dislike. But before this plot had ripened he found that the cry of danger to the Church, and the universal feeling against the Irish Catholics, would better serve his purpose, and serve it without risk to the royal family. Accordingly, on this ground he fastened a quarrel upon his Whig servants; and they ceased for many a long year to rule the councils of the country.

It is a singular instance of George III.'s self-command and power of waiting his opportunity, that after Mr. Fox's death, when he had doomed in his own mind the Whig ministry to perdition, and while seeking eagerly the occasion to throw them down, he allowed them

to dissolve Parliament, thereby entailing upon himself the necessity of a second dissolution within a few months.

Lord Wellesley kept aloof from all these transactions; and his enemies, particularly a person of the name of Paul, whom he had at one time served and afterwards refused to promote, attempted an impeachment. The failure of this scheme was signal, and ended in new votes by large majorities, approving of his Indian administration.

In 1809 he was prevailed upon to accept the embassy to Spain; and the large and enlightened views which he soon took of all the questions of Spanish policy, were, when made known to those most familiar with the affairs of the Peninsula, the subject of wonder and of unmixed applause. I have heard Lord Holland and Mr. Allen, with both of whom he freely corresponded on those matters, declare that he was the person whom they had ever known who most impressed them with the idea of a great statesman. Upon his return, at the end of 1809, he was with some difficulty prevailed upon by the King to accept the department of Foreign Affairs, which he continued to administer till the beginning of 1812, when irreconcilable differences with Mr. Perceval, his narrow views of policy in all the departments of the state, his bigotry on the Catholic Question, his niggard support of the Spanish war, made it impossible to remain longer his colleague. At his death Lord Wellesley was commissioned by the Prince Regent to form a Coalition Government, and negotiated for some days with Lord Grenville and Lord Grey for that desirable object. The Regent's sincerity was more than doubtful. So Lord Wellesley soon found, and gave up the task as hopeless.

Upon Lord Liverpool's accession to the vacant premiership, he continued to discharge his parliamentary duty, guided by the independent and enlightened principles which he had ever professed. He brought forward the Catholic question in 1812, and only lost it by a majority of one, in a House where the cause was deemed the most hopeless. In 1819 he made a magnificent speech in support of the Government, when he deemed the peace of the country, and the safety of her institutions, threatened by the proceedings of the demagogue party. But while I acknowledged the ability he now displayed, and admired the youthful vigour which so many years, and years partly spent in Eastern climes, had not been able to impair, I could not avoid feeling that his old anti-jacobin fervour had been revived by sounds rather than substance, and that he had shaped his conduct unconstitutionally, by assuming that the bad times of 1793 and 1794 were renewed in our later day. Lord Grenville's conduct was on this occasion liable to the same remark. Not, however, that even we, who most strenuously opposed the coercive measures, had any doubt of the perils attending the abuse of unlimited public meetings. We felt that it must lead to evil,

and that, if unrestrained, it would end either in changing or in shaking the constitution. Lord Hutchinson, I well remember, openly avowed his satisfaction that measures which had become of pressing necessity had been taken rather by a Tory than a Whig Government; and declared that public meetings must either be regulated or forbidden. But we disapproved the course taken by the Ministers, and we were persuaded that the accounts of treasonable conspiracies were greatly exaggerated, holding it certain that, how dangerous soever the very large meetings might be, the plots sought to be connected with them were hatched in the brains of spies and other Government emissaries.¹

In 1825 Lord Wellesley accepted the high office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. His government was signalised by persevering attempts to obtain the emancipation of the Catholics, and he was of course the object of bitter hatred and unsparing attack from the more violent of the Orange party. His recall took place upon the formation of the Wellington ministry in 1828. When at the end of 1830 the Whigs came into office, he was appointed Lord Steward of the Household, and in 1833 he resumed the Viceroyalty of Ireland, which he held until the change of Government in 1834. He then resigned at once his high office, not waiting till he should be pressed by the new Government to retain it, as in all probability he would have been. He held himself bound in honour to the Whig party to retire upon their very unceremonious dismissal by King William. Steady to his party, he was actively engaged in preparing the opposition to the Peel Ministry; arranged the important measure of the speakership, the first blow which that Ministry received; and with his own hand drew the resolution which on the 8th of April brought it to a close. It cannot be affirmed that the Whig party was equally steady to him. On their accession to power, I have heard him say, he received the first intimation that he was not to return to Ireland from one of the door-keepers at the House of Lords whom he overheard, as he passed, telling another of my friend Lord Mulgrave's appointment.

The secret history of this transaction is not yet known; and we are bound to disbelieve all reports which the gossip of the idle, or the malice of the spiteful, or the mistaken zeal of friends may propagate. Two things, however, are certain: *first*, Lord Wellesley's removal from among the Whigs—that is, his not being re-appointed in April, 1835—could not by possibility be owing to any the least

¹ Mention having been made in the text of Lord Wellesley's early anti-jacobin prejudices giving a bias to his conduct in 1819, it is only fair to add that these prejudices in no wise warped his judgment in spring, 1815. He at that critical moment was against a renewal of the war, and friendly to continuing at peace with France, though under Napoleon. He was intimately persuaded that both the French people and their ruler were entirely changed in their feelings and views, and that we had no right to burthen ourselves with all the heavy costs of a new war, independent of its risk, in order to restore the Bourbons a second time against the people's will.

doubt of his great capacity for affairs continuing as vigorous as ever, because I have before me a despatch in which the head of the Government, as late as the end of August, 1834, declares "the solving of the problem of Irish government to be a task every way worthy of Lord Wellesley's powerful and comprehensive understanding;" adding, "You will not suspect me of flattery when I say that in my conscience I believe there is no man alive more equal to such a work, and more capable of effecting it, than your Excellency"—*secondly*, falsehood never assumed a more foul audacious form than in the eulogies lavished upon the new Government at the expense of Lord Wellesley's Irish administration. That Government, it was said, never would have passed the Coercion Act of 1833! Indeed! But that Coercion Act came from Lord Melbourne's own office, when as Home Secretary he presided over the Irish department; the only mitigation of the Act having been effected by the Government of 1834 on Lord Wellesley's suggestion. The successor of Lord Wellesley, it was also said, for the first time administered the Government fairly and favourably towards the Catholics. Indeed! but Lord Wellesley first brought forward Catholics for the higher offices in the law, and continually propounded measures in their favour, which for some reason or other were never carried into effect. There are two classes of persons who must be covered with shame upon reading such passages as the following, extracted from his lordship's despatch of September, 1834; the vile calumniators of Lord Wellesley as never having given the Catholics fair play, and those who suffered their supporters to varnish over their weakness by an invidious contrast of their doings with his, profiting by the constantly repeated falsehood that they were the first who ever treated with justice the professors of a religion to which the bulk of the people belonged. "I think it would be advisable (says his Excellency) to open three seats on the judicial bench, and to take one of the judges from the Roman Catholic bar. This would give the greatest satisfaction to the whole Roman Catholic body. Your lordship, I am convinced, will concur with me in opinion that the Roman Catholics of Ireland have never yet been admitted to the full benefit of the laws passed for their relief. Entitled by law to admission into almost any office in the state, they have been, and are still, practically excluded from almost every branch of the executive administration of the Government. The few admitted into the station of assistant-barristers, or into the police, only serve to mark the right to admission, without any approach to an equitable distribution of official benefit. It is impossible to suppose that a whole nation can repose confidence or act cordially with a Government when so large a portion of the people are practically excluded from all share in the higher offices of the state, while their right to admission is established by law. I therefore conceive that one of the first steps towards the pacification of Ireland should be the correction of this

defect; and for this purpose I submit to your lordship's judgment that it is expedient to admit a certain proportion of Roman Catholics into the privy council, to the bench, to the higher stations of the law, to other efficient civil offices, and to increase their numbers in the police and in other establishments. This system should be commenced at the same time with the new legal appointments, which would form a main part of it. I would also appoint some Roman Catholics of distinction to the privy council. This would be a commencement which I can venture to assure your lordship would be safe and most satisfactory to the whole Roman Catholic body of Ireland." He then encloses a list of those Roman Catholics whom he recommends, and requests an affirmative answer, that he "may immediately make the necessary official applications to the Home Secretary."

In making public this remarkable document, I violate no official confidence; for though I held the Great Seal at the time when this important correspondence passed, I was not, owing to some accident, made acquainted with any part of it until the present time (1843). I am therefore wholly free from the responsibility of having neglected so material a communication. When the Ministers met in Cabinet at the end of October, they had hardly time left, before their dismissal, to mature any plan such as that which Lord Wellesley so earnestly recommended; but some of those Ministers, aware of that plan, must have felt that they received a strange piece of good fortune, if not of very strict justice, when they found themselves all of a sudden, in May, 1835, zealously supported by the traducers of Lord Wellesley, and upon the express ground of their being just to the Catholics, whom he had never thought of relieving. I have repeatedly, in my place, while these Ministers were present and in power, denounced the gross injustice and the scandalous falsehood of those their supporters, who professed to prefer them to Lord Grey's Government and mine, because we had passed a Coercion Bill which had the entire concurrence and the cordial support of the very Ministers now declared to be incapable of suffering such a measure; and I have expressed my astonishment that any class of men could submit to receive support upon such grounds, without at once declaring that the blame and the praise were alike falsely bestowed; but I was not on these occasions aware of the extreme to which this falsehood was carried, as regarded Lord Wellesley's administration, and I was not till now informed of the extraordinary self-command which my illustrious friend had shown in suffering all such imputations without any attempt to protect himself from their force.¹

¹ Equal abstinence and dignity did he show in never allowing the laudatory opinions expressed of him in 1834 to be cited as an answer to the statement industriously whispered about rather than openly promulgated, by way of extenuating the refusal to re-appoint him in May, 1835. It was said that he no longer had the

A very useful lesson of caution is taught by this passage in Lord Wellesley's life. How often do we see vehement and unceasing attacks made upon a minister or a statesman, perhaps not in the public service, for something which he does not choose to defend or explain, resting his claims to the confidence of his country upon his past exertions and his known character! Yet these assaults are unremittingly made upon him, and the people believe that so much noise could not be stirred up without something to authorise it. Sometimes the objects of the calumny are silent from disdain, sometimes from knowing that the base propagators of it will only return to their slander the more eagerly after their conviction of falsehood; but sometimes also the silence may be owing to official reserve. We here see in Lord Wellesley's case a most remarkable example of that reserve. All the while that the disseminators of slander were proclaiming him as abandoning the Catholics—him who had been the first to move, and within a hair's-breadth to obtain, their emancipation in the Lords, the stronghold of their enemies—all the while that they were exalting his successors at his expense, by daily repeating the false assertion that they for the first time conceived the just and politic plan of removing every obstruction arising from religion to a full enjoyment of the public patronage—all the while that they were placing the Melbourne Ministry upon a pinnacle, as having first adopted this liberal system of government—there lay in the Government repositories the original (in Lord Wellesley's the copy) of a despatch, explaining, recommending, enforcing the necessity of that course, and stating his desire to carry the plan into immediate execution, when the return of the King's messenger should bring the permission, which he solicited so earnestly, of his official superiors. If that permission was delayed for three months, until the Ministry was changed, and Lord Wellesley followed them into retirement, he at least was not to be blamed for the mischance; yet for eight years did he remain silent under those charges—for eight years did the Ministry maintain the same silence under the support which those charges brought them—nay, with the parliamentary majorities which those charges daily afforded them; and now, for the first time, that document sees the light, in which was recorded an irrefragable proof that the charges were not merely false, but the very reverse of the truth—that the support thus given rested upon a foundation positively opposite to the fact.

The excellence of Lord Wellesley's speeches has been mentioned. The taste which he had formed from study of the great Greek exemplars kept him above all tinsel and vulgar ornaments, and made him jealously hold fast by the purity of our language; but it

vigour of mind required for the difficulties of the Administration; but Lord Melbourne declared, a few months before, that no one was so fit to grapple with these difficulties.

had not taught him the virtue of conciseness; and he who knew the *κατὰ κράτος* by heart, and always admitted its unmeasurable superiority to the second Philippic and the Pro Milone, yet formed his own style altogether upon the Roman model. That style, indeed, was considerably diffuse; and the same want of compression, the same redundancy of words, accompanied, however, by substantial though not always needful sense, was observable, though much less observable, in his poetical pieces, which generally possessed very high excellence. It is singular to mark the extraordinary contrast which his thoughts and his expressions presented in this respect. There was nothing superfluous or roundabout in his reasoning—nothing dilatory or feeble in the conceptions which produced his plans. He saw his object at once, and with intuitive sagacity; he saw it in its true colours and real dimensions; he at one glance espied the path, and the shortest path, that led to it; he in an instant took that path, and reached his end. The only prolixity that he ever fell into was in explaining or defending the proceedings thus concisely and rapidly taken. To this some addition was not unnaturally made by the dignity which the habits of vice-regal state made natural to him, and the complimentary style which, if a very little tintured with Oriental taste, was very much more the result of a kindly and generous nature.

I have felt precluded from indulging in general description by the intimacy of my intercourse with this great statesman, and I have accordingly kept my promise to the reader of letting the narrative of his actions draw his portrait; but it would be unjust to omit all mention of that lofty nature which removed him above every thought of personal interest, and made him so careless of all sordid considerations, that I verily believe he spent several fortunes without ever having lost a farthing at play, or ever having indulged in any other expensive vice. His original embarrassments, and from these he never was relieved, arose entirely from generously paying his father's debts.¹ He was exceedingly fond of glory, and loved dearly the fame that should follow such great deeds as his; but he had no kind of envy, no jealousy of other men's greatness; and a better proof can hardly be given of his magnanimity than the extreme warmth of the praise which he lavished profusely on all the great commanders whom he employed. He earnestly pressed, but it is strange to say, vainly pressed, even their promotion to the peerage sixteen years before it took place, without ever harbouring a thought of the tendency which their elevation might have to eclipse his own fame in vulgar eyes.

Nothing could be more gentle and affectionate than his whole disposition; and during his latter years, next to his books, nothing so refreshed his mind as the intercourse with those friends in whose society and converse he delighted.

¹ The Corporation of Dublin unanimously voted him their freedom in token of the admiration which this conduct had excited.

LORD HOLLAND.

It is a very mournful reflection for me that, much as I might have expected the sacred duty to devolve upon me of paying a just tribute to Lord Wellesley's memory, I should also be called to commemorate the excellence of one whom I might far less have looked to survive, and whose loss made all his friends feel that the value of their own lives was now greatly impaired. It may be doubted if any man in any age ever had so few enemies, so many attached friends, as Lord Holland; and no man certainly could better deserve the universal affection of which he was the object.

His succession to the peerage at a very early age, on his father's death, prevented him from ever sitting in the House of Commons, and thus passing through the best school of English statesmen. His own severe illness, while yet at Eton, gave his uncle, Mr. Fox, a double alarm; for he was not only on the point of losing a nephew whom he loved as if he had been his only child, but ran the imminent risk of being taken from the House of Commons in the zenith of his fame as a debater and a party chief. He was then in the North of Italy; and the messenger from Devonshire House, commissioned to summon him home on account of the King's illness, met him at Bologna. Mr. Fox had received intelligence of Lord Holland's dangerous illness; and the alarm occasioned by the appearance of the courier was speedily changed into despair by a few words which he dropped, intimating that "he must be dead by this time." Great was Mr. Fox's relief and joy, probably in more ways than one, upon finding that the King was the person alluded to. Many years after this period I saw his banker at Vicenza, who was acquainted with the circumstance of Mr. Fox's alarm; and I was much struck with the familiar notion of this great man's celebrity, which seemed to have reached that remote quarter, at a time when political intelligence was so much less diffused than it has been since the French Revolution. The banker mentioned having given professionally a very practical proof of his respect for the name; he had cashed a bill for the expense of his journey home, though there was no letter of introduction presented; "but I knew him," said the Cambist; "by the prints." The rapid journey home to join the fray then raging in the House of Commons laid the foundation of the liver complaint, which eighteen years later ended in dropsy, and terminated his life; but he was relieved on his arrival from all anxiety upon

account of his nephew, whom he found perfectly restored to health.

Lord Holland went to Christ Church on leaving Eton ; and passed his time more gaily than studiously, the companion of Mr. Canning, Lord Carlisle, and Lord Granville. But, like them, he laid both at school and college a broad foundation of classical learning, which through his after-life he never ceased successfully to cultivate.

Upon entering the House of Lords, he found the prospects of the Whig party as gloomy as it was possible to contemplate. Before they had nearly recovered from the effects of the ill-starred coalition, their dissensions among themselves upon the great questions of the French Revolution and the war had split them in twain, leaving some of their most powerful families, as the houses of Cavendish, Bentinck, and Wentworth, and some of their most eminent leaders, as Burke, Windham, Loughborough, and North, to join the now resistless forces of Mr. Pitt. Their Parliamentary strength was thus reduced to a mere fraction of the already diminished numbers that had survived the defeat of 1784 ; and the alarm, not by any means unnatural or unfounded, which the progress of the French arms, and the excesses of the Revolution, had excited throughout the country seemed to marshal all the friends of our established institutions, whether in Church or in State, and even all men of property and all men of sound and moderate opinions, against those who were branded with the names of revolutionists, levellers, un-English, friends and disciples of the French. For the first time the Whig party, essentially aristocratic as it always had been in former ages, in some sort alien to all popular courses, and standing mainly upon patrician influence against both the court and the multitude, as it had proved itself in its very last struggle for power, had become mixed up with the very extremes of popular enthusiasm, extremes to which the people, even the middle orders, were very averse ; and which were only favoured by two classes, alike void of influence in the practical affairs of State, the philosophic few and the mere vulgar. For the first time, they who had ever been reformers on the most restricted scale were fain to join the cry for unlimited reforms, both of Parliament and of all our institutions. The leaders might retain their ancient prejudices in favour of aristocracy and against reform, and might confine their Parliamentary efforts to exposing the misconduct of the war, endeavouring to restore peace, and resisting the measures of coercion adopted by Mr. Pitt unconstitutionally to protect the existing constitution. But the bulk of the party became more or less connected with the reformers, and even the few who in the House of Commons still adhered to the standard of Mr. Fox were for the most part imbued with the reform faith. The Whig party indeed was then wofully reduced in strength. Mr. Pitt could with certainty carry whatever measures he propounded ; and at length, after wasting some years in fruitless attempts to resist his power, having been able to muster no more

than 53 votes against suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, 38 for putting an end to the war, and 45 for censuring the illegal act of misapplying the money voted by Parliament, the Opposition, wearied of impotent efforts and impatient of unvaried defeat, retired from their attendance in Parliament, retaining the seats, and refusing to perform the duties of representatives.

It was at this most inauspicious period in the whole Whig history, that Lord Holland entered the House of Lords, where there could hardly be said to remain even the name of an Opposition party. He joined himself, however, to the few supporters of his uncle's principles still to be found there lingering on the Opposition benches, — Lord Lauderdale, the Duke of Bedford, occasionally the first Lord Lansdowne, whose connexion with Lord Holland, and steady opposition to the war, had now well nigh reconciled him with the party, although he always took a line more guided by general principles of policy, and more enlarged in its views, than suited the narrow-minded notions of factious men.

Lord Holland's course was now, as ever through his whole public life, one which did equal honour to his head and to his heart. The vigilant enemy of abuses; the staunch supporter of the constitution as established in 1688; the friend of peace abroad, and of liberty all over the world; the champion, especially, of religious liberty and the sacred rights of conscience, and that upon sound principles of universal freedom, not from any tinge of fanaticism, from which no man, not even his illustrious kinsman, was more exempt; — he soon obtained that respect in Parliament, and that general esteem among reflecting men in the country, which the mere exhibition of great talents can never command, and which is only to be earned by honest consistency in pursuing a course commendable for its wisdom, or by its sincerity extorting applause from those who disapprove it. During the period of above five and forty years that he continued before the eyes of his countrymen, sometimes filling high office, more frequently engaged in opposition to the Court and the Ministry of the day, it is certain that whensoever any occasion arose of peril to the great cause of toleration, the alarmed eye instinctively turned first of all to Lord Holland as the refuge of the persecuted; and as often as the constitution in any other respect was endangered, or any bad, exclusive, illiberal policy placed in jeopardy our character abroad and the interests of peace,¹ to him, among the foremost, did the supporters of a wise and catholic po-

¹ I may state what I firmly and with knowledge believe, that Lord Holland, in the lamentable defection from the cause of peace which was made by the Whig Government in 1840, was with the greatest difficulty prevented from resigning his office, and leaving the Ministry to prosecute, without the countenance of his high name, their disastrous course. Were I to add that his actual resignation was sent in to his colleagues, I think I should be guilty of no exaggeration. That he afterwards, during the short residue of his life, regretted not having persisted in this course, I also believe.

licy look for countenance and comfort in their efforts to arrest the course of evil.

To a higher praise still he was justly entitled—the praise of extraordinary disinterestedness in all questions of colonial policy. In right of Lady Holland, a great Jamaica heiress, he was the owner of extensive possessions cultivated by slave labour; but there was no more strenuous advocate of the abolition both of the slave-trade and slavery; and Lady Holland herself, the person more immediately interested in the continuance of those enormous abuses, had too much wisdom and too much virtue ever to interpose the least difference of opinion on this important subject.

Although he naturally felt towards his uncle all the warmth of filial affection, and looked up to him with the singular reverence with which men of extraordinary celebrity and extensive public influence are regarded by their family, he was wholly above the bigotry which suffers no tenet of its object to be questioned, and the enthusiasm which, dazzled by shining merits, is blind to undeniable faults. Not only was he ever ready to admit that the taste for play had proved ruinous to Mr. Fox's political fortunes, as well as his private—asccribing, indeed, fully more to its evil influence than could justly be charged upon it, for he was wont to say that this alone had prevented him from being Minister of the country—but he avoided several prejudices and tastes, if we may so speak of political errors, in which that great man indulged to the serious injury of his understanding and his accomplishments. Thus Mr. Fox, like General Fitzpatrick, Mr. Hare, Lord John Townsend, and others of that connexion, greatly undervalued the talents and pursuits of the Scotch, holding the Irish as infinitely their superiors, and not duly estimating the importance of the sterling good sense, the patient seeking after truth, and the reluctance to deviate from it in their statements, for which, and justly, the Scotch are famous. Lord Holland had no such prejudice: on the contrary, he greatly preferred the men of the North, and had no disinclination to their peculiar pursuits, their metaphysics and their political economy, their eagerness after facts, their carelessness of fancies, their addiction to the useful, their disregard of the graces. In the speeches of Mr. Fox and his school—always, of course, excepting Mr. Burke—it was easy to observe a want of information upon many subjects well worthy the attention of statesmen, and an ignorance of which may indeed be held fatal to their character for profound and enlarged views of policy. They were well read in history, deeply versed in the principles of the constitution and its learning, and acquainted (Mr. Fox himself especially) with the policy and interests of foreign courts; but to these subjects and to the debates in Parliament of former times, their information was confined; while Lord Holland scarcely ever addressed the House of Lords without showing that he was both a scholar in the best sense of the word, and had formed

an acquaintance with various branches of knowledge which are far too much neglected in the education of English gentlemen. Upon everything relating to religious controversy he was in a particular manner well informed. His residence, too, in Spain at different times had filled his mind with an accurate and detailed knowledge both of the history and the literature of the Peninsula, and generally of the South of Europe. The liberal hospitality which he exercised at home, making Holland House the resort not only of the most interesting persons composing English society, literary, philosophical, and political, but also of all belonging to those classes who ever visited this country from abroad, served to maintain and extend his acquaintance with whatever regarded the rest of Europe.

Lord Holland's powers as a speaker were of a very high order. He was full of argument, which he could pursue with great vigour and perfect closeness; copious in illustration; with a chaste and pure diction, shunning, like his uncle, everything extravagant in figure and unusual in phrase; often, like him, led away by an ingenuity, and like him not unfrequently led to take a trivial view of his subject, and to dwell upon some small matter which did not much help on the business in hand, but always keeping that in view, and making no sacrifices to mere effect. Declamation—solemn, sustained declamation—was the forte of neither, although occasionally the uncle would show that he could excel in that also, as Raphael has painted perhaps the finest fire-light piece in the world, and Titian the noblest landscape. Neither made any the least pretence to gracefulness of action, and both were exceedingly deficient in voice, the nephew especially, as he had little of the redeeming quality by which his uncle occasionally penetrated and thrilled his audience with those high and shrill notes that proceeded from him when, heated with his argument, he overpowered both his own natural hesitation and the faculties of his hearer. In Lord Holland the hesitation was so great as to be often painful; and, instead of yielding to the increased volume of his matter, it often made him breathless in the midst of his more vehement discourse. He wanted command of himself; and, seeming to be run away with, he was apt to lose the command over his audience. The same delicate sense of humour which distinguished Mr. Fox he also showed; and much of that exquisite Attic wit, which formed so large and so effective a portion of that great orator's argumentation, never uselessly introduced, always adapted nicely to the occasion, always aiding, and, as it were, clinching the reasoning.

Thus accomplished as he was for the rhetorical art, had his health, and a kind of indolence common to the Fox family—perhaps, too, their disdain of all preparation, all but natural eloquence—allowed him to study oratory more, it is difficult to say how high a place he might have reached among orators. Certainly no one could any day have been surprised to hear him deliver some great speech of

equal merit with those of the illustrious kinsman whom he so much resembled. It was once said by Lord Erskine, on hearing him make, off-hand, a great display of argumentative power, "I shall complain of the Usher of the Black Rod : why did he not take Charles Fox into custody last night ? What the deuce business has a member of the other House to come up and make his speeches here ?"

Of a Cabinet to which, by a singular combination of unlikely chances, he and the other Whigs belonged for eleven or twelve years, he was an efficient member. The places which he held (Privy Seal, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) had, especially the former, little duty attached to them. He administered the Duchy, however, with the greatest purity and impartiality ; and when one of my legal reforms at one sweep cut off a third of his emoluments (above a thousand a-year), far from making the least resistance, any more than he did to the abolition of slavery, which soon after cost him twice as much, he stated his opinion to be entirely favourable to the change, and only said he was fortunate in having so long held the larger income. As a Minister, however, it is in the Cabinet that his merit must chiefly be estimated ; and I can vouch for his having been, in all branches of the King's service, a most useful and excellent colleague. He was perfectly open and frank where he differed in opinion ; quite candid, and free from prepossession in favour of his own views ; full of information, especially on questions of foreign policy, and on those regarding the constitution ; perfectly firm and resolute, when bold courses were to be taken. In occasions of this description, the four years that we passed together as colleagues were abundantly fruitful, and he never was found wanting. He loved the excitement of office ; he liked, from his excellently kind disposition, the disposal of patronage ; but he was also very sincerely anxious for the opportunity of promoting his political views, and especially of furthering the cause of liberty everywhere, and maintaining that peace to which it is inseparably wedded. Hence he was more anxious to retain office, and more averse to risk the loss of it, than was always quite consistent with the high principles which he professed ; and hence he made himself a party to the unconstitutional Government which, most injuriously to the country, and fatally to the interests of the Whig party, persisted in clinging to place for two years after all power in Parliament, all influence with the country, had departed from them, and nothing remained to prop up the crumbling edifice but the shadow of Court favour, now for the first time embraced as the shelter of a Whig Government from public indignation.

In part, possibly in great part, this misconduct of the Whig Ministry for the two years that followed May, 1839, is to be accounted for, certainly not excused, by their dread of facing the numerous place-lovers and place-hunters with whom they, like every other Government, were beset. In London, and in all corporate towns,

there were of course swarms of creatures, hatched by the sunshine of Court favour, and whose only dreams were of being enabled by the prolonged existence of the Cabinet, those already placed to continue batten on the public carcass, those only in expectancy to wriggle themselves into a share of it. These it was hard to face and to thwart. The same influence, or the same fear of offending adherents, occasioned undoubtedly that other most reprehensible act, too, most hurtful to the Liberal party, the dissolution in 1841. Who can for a moment believe that the Ministers themselves expected to obtain anything like a majority in the new Parliament? Then what possible right had they to make their Sovereign dissolve in order to increase the difficulties of those, her servants, who were to be their successors in office? This they well knew; and of this I warned them by private remonstrance, as indeed I took the liberty of humbly counselling my 'gracious Sovereign upon the measure, thereby discharging my duty as a Peer of Parliament. But "the pressure from without" was too powerful. Some score of members fancied their seats would be more secure were their own friends in office during the general election, than if that event happened when their adversaries were in power; and to their importunate clamour the Ministers were fain to yield. For this I find it far more difficult to give any excuse on Lord Melbourne's part, than for his proceedings in May, 1839, because I know the excellent nature of my old and valued friend too well to doubt that his retaining office then arose from a feeling, a mistaken one certainly, of duty to the person of the Queen. It may be unpleasant for any Minister to thwart the views of persons as active as they are insignificant in all respects save their power of being troublesome. But then it is his most sacred duty to disregard their buzz. No man in office, no leader of a party in this country, whether in the possession or in the pursuit of power, can be without the courage to face and to resist his adversaries; this is a very ordinary daring indeed. But he is utterly unfit to hold office, or to lead a party, who has not the higher and nobler courage to face and to resist his followers, and to hold his path onward regardless of their clamour, alike immovable from his fixed and stable resolves by the sordid howl of placemen, or the louder shout that proceeds from the multitude—from the *ardor civium prava jumentum*. To all who flinch from this I could read innumerable lessons in the striking contrast afforded by the official conduct, but indeed by the whole public life, of my dear and venerated friend Lord Grey, whose absence from the scene of debate has of late been so deeply lamented by every lover of his country, to whatever class or party he might belong.

Lord Holland's literary pursuits were varied and successful; for without giving much of his mind to composition, his 'Life of Lope de Vega,' and one or two other productions, have a rare degree of excellence. The style is animated and classical; the narrative

clear; the remarks sagacious and acute; the translations executed with a closeness and fidelity, and at the same time a poetical felicity, that place him in the highest rank of translators; for instead of giving, like some manglers of Dante, a rugged version as literal as it is unpoetical, and affording not a glimpse of the awful Florentine's figure, we have in Lord Holland's masterly performance a poem closely literal, rendering the very Spanish itself and almost in the same number of words, while it is as much imbued with poetry as if it were originally English. To execute such a work as this is extremely difficult, and far transcends the power of him who fancies he can translate because he knows the foreign language, without possessing any mastery over his mother-tongue. It is a difficulty superadded to that of the measure and to that of the rhyme; and, accordingly, very few have ever vanquished it. Dryden¹ and Sotheby are poetical, without being close to their divine originals; Cowper unites more of the two qualities than either of them; Lord Holland and Mr. Roscoe stand at the head of the class; and all that can be said in impeachment of this title is, that their efforts have only been directed to small pieces of poetry, and that on a larger scale they might not have been equally successful. I have mentioned Lord Holland's *forte* as a poet; but he wrote several original pieces; and I remember his showing me some political sonnets in the manner of Milton (the first of English sonneteers) which appeared, at least to so indifferent a judge as myself, possessed of very great merit. It is remarkable that, like his uncle, though so fond of poetry, he had no relish for the kindred art, the other branch of harmony. Music was positively disagreeable to them both—a remarkable instance of Shakspeare's extravagant error in a well-known passage of his plays.

His prose compositions were distinguished by the same severe taste, and the same strict regard to the purity of his English diction, which Mr. Fox is by some, certainly not by me, thought to have cherished in excess. But Lord Holland's prose style had still higher merits. It was luminous, animated, flowing, and free from the defect under which his illustrious relative's certainly laboured, not that which he himself was afraid of, its resembling a speech, for that it wholly avoided by running into the opposite extreme; it was somewhat stiff and constrained, betokening a want of practice in writing, and at the same time a fear of writing too naturally and

¹ There is not more poetry in Lucretius's description of hell than in Dryden's version, but it is not like Lucretius. Nor is there so much poetry in Virgil's

"Hic ver perpetuum atque alienis mensibus æstas,"
as in Sotheby's,

"Here spring perpetual leads the laughing hours,
And winter wears a wreath of summer flowers."

But the beauty lies in adding a flower to the Georgics. Lord Holland and Mr. Roscoe do not so treat their original and their reader.

easily, as he spoke; for nothing can be more easy and flowing and graceful than the style of Mr. Fox's letters. Lord Holland's prose style had all this grace and flow: it may be well judged of, not only by his 'Life of Lope de Vega,' but by his excellent 'Preface to Lord Waldegrave's, and Lord Orford's Remains', and, above all, by the admirable protests which he entered upon the Lords' journals and by the publication of which in a volume Mr. Moylan has rendered an acceptable service both to politics and letters.

After all, it was in his private and domestic capacity that Lord Holland's principal charm lay. No man's conversation was more delightful. It was varied, animated, passing "from grave to gay, from lively to severe;" full of information, chequered with the most admirable vein of anecdote, but also with deep remark, and aided by a rare power of mimicry, never indulged in a way to offend by its harshness. Whoever had heard him represent Lord Thurlow, or the late Lord Lansdowne, or the famous Duke of Brunswick, or George Selwyn, little needed to lament not having seen those celebrated personages. His advice was excellent; he viewed with perfect calmness the whole circumstances of his friend who consulted him; he foresaw all difficulties and consequences with intuitive perception and never-failing sagacity; he threw his whole soul into the discussion; and he was entirely free from the bias as well of selfishness as of prejudice in the counsels which he gave. The great delight of those who approached him was certainly in the amiable disposition of his heart, and of a temper so perfectly sweet, so perseveringly mild, that nothing could ruffle it for an instant, nor any person, nor any passing event, make the least impression upon its even surface. Many tempers are equal and placid constitutionally, but then this calm results from their being cold; the waters are not troubled, because their surface is frozen. Lord Holland's temper, on the contrary, like his uncle's, was warm, excitable, lively, animated. Yet I knew him intimately for five-and-thirty years, during a portion of which we had political and even party differences: I had during the most of these years almost daily intercourse with him; I can positively assert that though I saw him often sorely tried, and fear me I was now and then among those who tried him, I never for one moment perceived that there was in his composition the least element of anger, spite, peevishness, or revenge. In my whole experience of our race, I never saw such a temper, nor anything that at all resembled it.

His was the disposition of the Fox family. They have a noble and lofty character; their nature is generous and humane. Selfishness, meanness, craft, are alien to their whole composition. Open, manly, confiding, combining the highest qualities of the understanding with the best feelings of the heart, and marked throughout by the innocent simplicity of infancy; no wonder that they win the affections of all who approach them—that is to say, who approach

so near and know them so long as to be familiar with them—for both Mr. Fox and his nephew had the manners, somewhat repulsive at first, of patrician life; and the uncle, especially, was for a while even severely forbidding to strangers. It must be added that their aristocratic propensities were not confined to manner; they had the genuine Whig predilection for that kind of support, and regarded, perhaps justly regarded, the union of great families as absolutely necessary to maintain the popular cause against the Court. Mr. Fox, however, went a little further; and showed more complacency in naming highly-born supporters, than might seem altogether to consist with a high popular tone, or with the tenets of a philosophical statesman. It is to be added that with the simplicity of an infantine nature, they had the defect, as regards their affections, of that tender age. Their feelings were strong, but not deep; the impressions made on their heart were passing, and soon effaced. I have often rallied, and sometimes remonstrated with my friend on this peculiarity, when I saw him as I thought regarding men rather with the eyes of a naturalist than a brother, and rather taking an interest in observing their habits and marking their peculiarities, than feeling as deeply as their relation to us required.¹ But with these imperfections (how trifling compared to his virtues!) it is painful to think he is gone for ever; and cruel to survey the blank he has left. Once more one is forced mournfully to exclaim,—“*Eheu! quanto minus est cum aliis versari quam tul meminisse!*”

It would be a very imperfect account of Lord Holland which should make no mention of the friend who for the latter and more important part of his life shared all his thoughts and was never a day apart from him, Mr. John Allen; or the loss which in him the world of politics and of science, but still more, our private circle, has lately had to deplore—another blank which assuredly cannot be filled up. He was educated at Edinburgh as a physician, and stood far at the head of all his contemporaries as a student of the sciences connected with the healing art; but he also cultivated most successfully all the branches of intellectual philosophy, and was eminent in that famous school of metaphysics, for his extensive learning and his unrivalled power of subtle reasoning. For some years he lectured most ably on Physiology, but before entering on practice he accepted an invitation to attend Lord Holland's family, during

¹ One of the most able and learned men whom I have ever known, and one of the most sagacious observers, Mr. R. P. Smith, who read these pages, and well knew Lord Holland, with whom he was nearly connected by marriage, while he acknowledged the general accuracy of the portrait I had drawn, objected to this portion, unless an addition were made, in which I entirely concur, that after ever so long an absence from any of his friends his warmth of affection revived, and was as great as before the separation.

the peace of Amiens, on their journey first to France, then to Spain, where they remained till the year 1805. The materials which he collected in the latter country for a complete account of it, both historical and statistical, were of great extent and value; and a considerable portion of the work was completed, when the pleasures of political discussion, working with the natural indolence of his habits as he advanced in life, occasioned him to lay it aside; and of late years he chiefly confined his labours to some very learned papers upon the antiquarian lore of the English constitution in the 'Edinburgh Review.' He also published in 1830 a learned and luminous work upon the ancient history of that constitution.

He had originally been a somewhat indiscriminate admirer of the French Revolution, and was not of the number of its eulogists whom the excesses of 1793 and 1794 alienated from its cause. Even the Directorial tyranny had not opened his eyes to the evils of its course; but a larger acquaintance with mankind, more of what is termed "knowledge of the world," greatly mitigated the strength of his opinions, and his minute study of the ancient history of our own constitution completed his emancipation from earlier prejudices—nay, rather cast his opinions into the opposite scale; for it is certain that during the last thirty or forty years of his life, in other words, during all his political life, far from tolerating revolutionary courses, or showing any tenderness towards innovations, he was a reformer on so small a scale that he could hardly be brought to approve of any change at all in our Parliamentary constitution. He held the measure of 1831-32 as all but revolutionary; augured ill of its effects on the structure of the House of Commons; and regarded it as having in the result worked great mischief on the composition of that body, whatever benefit it might have secured to the Whigs as a party measure. Lord Holland had made up his mind to an entire approval of the scheme as necessary, if not for the country, at least for the Liberal party, to which he was devoted; and he supported it, as his uncle had done the far less extensive reform proposed by Lord Grey in 1797, which, less as it was, very much exceeded any reform views of his own, supported it as a party measure, necessary for keeping together the Liberal body and consolidating their power.

Although Mr. Allen, during the latter and principal period of his life, never abandoned his scientific pursuits, retaining his full knowledge of physical and moral science, and his early taste for such speculations, yet it was chiefly between the politics of the day and the constitutional history of this country that he divided his time. No one could be more useful as an adviser upon all political measures, because he clearly saw their tendency, and never for a moment suffered himself to be led astray by party prejudice or popular clamour. Indeed, like all who, in the enthusiasm of younger years, have been for a while beguiled into extravagant democratic

opinions, he rather leant too severely against merely popular courses, and was somewhat too much inclined to have the public affairs which are directed for the good of the people managed with as little as possible of their interference or consent—forgetting that no real security for those affairs taking that direction can be had, except by giving a sufficient control to the popular voice; but chiefly of the Court he was always distrustful, and herein he had the genuine Whig spirit excited and confirmed by his deep study of our former history. The only failing which seemed occasionally to lessen the weight of his counsel was a certain irritability of temper and impatience of contradiction, especially upon subjects which he had deeply studied, and on which he had formed a clear and strong opinion. It must be said that the by-stander could well sympathise with those little ebullitions when they escaped him in argument with some sciolist, or some every-day politician whose whole knowledge of his subject was picked up in the clubs, or gathered from the papers of the morning, or at best gleaned from the recent volumes of the 'Parliamentary Debates.'

If it be asked what was the peculiar merit, the characteristic excellence of Mr. Allen's understanding, the answer is not difficult to make. It was the rare faculty of combining general views with details of fact, and thus at once availing himself of all that theory or speculation presents for our guide, with all that practical experience affords to correct those results of general reasoning. This great excellence was displayed by him in everything to which he directed his mind, whether it were the political questions of the day, which he treated as practically as the veriest drudge in any of the public offices, and yet with all the enlargement of view which marked the statesman and the philosopher; or the speculations of history, which he studied at once with the acumen that extracts from it as an essence the general progress of our species, after the manner of Voltaire and Millar; and with the minute observation of facts and weighing of evidence which we trace through the luminous and picturesque pages of Robertson and Gibbon. He for whom no theory was too abstract, no speculation too general, could so far stoop to the details of practical statesmanship as to give a friend, proceeding for the first time on a delicate and important mission, this sound advice:—"Don't ever appear anxious about any point, either in arguing to convince those you are treating with, or in trying to obtain a concession from them. It often may happen that your indifference will gain a much readier access to their minds. Earnestness and anxiety are necessary for one addressing a public assembly—not so for a negotiator."

The character of Mr. Allen was of the highest order. His integrity was sterling, his honour pure and untarnished. No one had a more lofty disdain of those mean tricks to which, whether on trifles or matters of importance, worldly men have too frequent recourse.

Without the shadow of fanaticism in any of its forms, he was, in all essential particulars, a person of the purest morals; and his indignation was never more easily roused than by the aspect of daring profligacy or grovelling baseness. His feelings, too, were warm; his nature kind and affectionate. No man was a more steady or sincere friend; and his enmity, though fierce, was placable.

It may naturally be asked how it happened that one of his great talents, long experience, and many rare accomplishments, intimately connected as he was with the leading statesmen of his time (the Ministers of the Crown for the last ten years of his life), should never have been brought into public life, nor ever been made in any way available to the service of the country? Nor can the answer to this question be that he had no powers of public speaking, and would, if in Parliament, have been for the most part a silent member; because it would not be easy to name a more unbroken silence than was for many long years kept by such leading Whigs as Mr. Hare, Lord John Townsend, and General Fitzpatrick, without whom, nevertheless, it was always supposed that the Whig phalanx would have been wanting in its just proportions; and also because there are many important, many even high political, offices that can well and usefully be filled by men wholly unused to the wordy war; yet Mr. Allen never filled any place except as Secretary, nay Under-Secretary, for a few months, to the Commissioners for treating with America in 1806. Then I fear we are driven, in accounting for this strange fact, to the high aristocratic habits of our Government, if the phrase may be allowed; and can comprehend Mr. Allen's entire exclusion from power in no other way than by considering it as now a fixed and settled rule that there is in this country a line drawn between the ruling caste and the rest of the community—not, indeed, that the latter are mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, but that, out of a profession like the bar, intimately connected with politics, or out of the patrician circles themselves the monopolists of political preferment, no such rise is in ordinary cases possible. The genius of our system, very far from consulting its stable endurance, appears thus to apportion its labours and its enjoyments, separating the two classes of our citizens by an impassable line, and bestowing freely upon the one the sweat and the toil, while it reserves strictly for the other the fruit and the shade.

APPENDIX.

(Walpole and Bolingbroke do not belong to the reign of George III. But it is impossible well to understand Lord Chatham without considering Walpole also. However, the great importance of continually holding up Walpole to the admiration of all statesmen, and Bolingbroke, except for his genius, to their reprobation, is the chief ground of inserting this Appendix.)

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

The antagonist whom Lord Chatham first encountered on his entering into public life was the veteran Walpole, who instinctively dreaded him the moment he heard his voice; and having begun by exclaiming, "We must muzzle that terrible Cornet of horse!" either because he found him not to be silenced by promotion, or because he deemed punishment in this case better than blandishment, ended by taking away his commission, and making him an enemy for ever. It was a blunder of the first order; it was of a kind, too, which none less than Walpole were apt to commit: perhaps it was the most injudicious thing, possibly the only very injudicious thing, he ever did; certainly it was an error for which he paid the full penalty before he ceased to lead the House of Commons and govern the country.

Few men have ever reached and maintained for so many years the highest station which the citizen of a free state can hold, who have enjoyed more power than Sir Robert Walpole, and have left behind them less just cause of blame, or more monuments of the wisdom and virtue for which his country has to thank him. Of Washington, indeed, if we behold in him a different character, one of a far more exalted description, there is this to be said, both that his imperishable fame rests rather upon the part he bore in the Revolution than on his administration of the Government which he helped to create; and that his unequalled virtue and self-denial never could be practised in circumstances which, like those of Walpole, afforded no temptation to ambition, because they gave no means of usurping larger powers than the law bestowed; consequently his case cannot be compared, in any particular, with that of a prime minister under an established monarchical constitution. But Walpole held for many

years the reins of government in England under two princes, neither of them born or bred in the country — held them during the troubles of a disputed succession, and held them while European politics were complicated with various embarrassments; and yet he governed at home without any inroads upon public liberty; he administered the ordinary powers of the constitution without requiring the dangerous help of extreme temporary rigour; he preserved tranquillity at home without pressing upon the people; and he maintained peace abroad without any sacrifice either of the interests or the honour of the country. If no brilliant feats of improvement in our laws or in the condition of the state were attempted; — if no striking evolutions of external policy were executed; — at least all was kept safe and quiet in every quarter, and the irrepressible energies of national industry had the fullest scope afforded them during a lengthened season of repose which in those days of “foreign war and domestic levy” was deemed a fortune hardly to be hoped for, and of which the history of the country had never offered any example.

Walpole was a man of an ancient, honourable, and affluent family, one of the first in the county of Norfolk, to whose possessions he succeeded while yet too young for entering into the Church, the profession he was destined to had an elder brother lived. Rescued from that humbler fortune (in which, however, he always said he would have risen to the Primacy), he had well nigh fallen into one more obscure — the life of a country gentleman, in which he might have whiled away his time like his ancestors, between the profession of a sportsman pursued with zeal, and that of a farmer always failing, because always more than half neglected by him who unites in his own person both landlord and tenant. The dangers of the Protestant succession at the close of King William’s reign excited his attention to political matters upon his entrance into Parliament. The death of the Duke of Gloucester, Princess Anne’s son, had alarmed both the illustrious prince on the throne and the Liberal party in general; the Tories had thrown every obstacle in the way of the Act of Settlement, by which the King was anxiously endeavouring to bequeath the freedom he had conquered for his adopted country; they had only introduced it in the hopes of its miscarrying; and the near balance of parties in Parliament, when the Abjuration Oath was carried by a majority of one (1688 to 1689), evinced too clearly that in the country the decided majority were for the exiled family. It is easy to conceive how greatly the having commenced his public life at such a crisis must have attracted him towards state affairs, and how lasting an impression the momentous question that first engaged his attention must have produced upon his political sentiments in after-life. Soon after came the great question of privilege, the case of the Aylesbury men, arising out of the action

† He seconded the motion of Sir Charles Hedges for extending the oath to ecclesiastical persons. It was carried without a division.

of Ashby v. White; and here he, with the other leading Whigs — the Cowpers, the Kings, the Jekyls, the Cavendishes — took a decided part for the general law of the land, against the extravagant doctrines of privilege maintained by the Tories. Sacheverell's trial — a Whig folly, which he privately did all in his power to prevent — completed his devotion to political life; he was one of the managers, and was exposed to his share of the popular odium into which all the promoters of that ill-advised proceeding not unnaturally fell. The Church party were so powerful that the mob was on their side as well as the Queen's Court; and this incident in Whig history, described by Bolingbroke as having a parson to roast, and burning their hands in the fire, made Walpole dread that fire ever after; for it is not more certain that the share with which he in the Act of Settlement successfully commenced his public life, gave a strong Whig bias to his after-life, than it is certain that the Sacheverell case gave him a constitutional abhorrence of religious controversy, and an invincible repugnance to touch any question that could connect itself with Church or Sectarian clamour. Through his whole public life he betrayed a lurking dread of anything on which the religious sentiments of the community could be brought to bear, as if aware that these being subjects on which men feel rather than reason, it is impossible to descry before-hand the course public opinion may take upon them, or fix bounds to the excitement they may produce. This, and not any indifference to the great cause of toleration, always kept him from seeking securities which there is every reason to think he would naturally have wished to obtain against the High Church party, and in favour of the Sectaries.

The sagacity of such men as Godolphin and Marlborough early descried Walpole's merit, which at once procured him their favour: with the latter, to whom he owed his first appointment of Secretary at War, his intercourse was always intimate and confidential. When a vile Court intrigue saved France from being undone by the victories of that great man; when what St. Simon call the "*Miracle de Londres*" unexpectedly rescued Louis XIV. from his doom; when, as Frederick II. many years after said, Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, were all unable to defend him against destruction, and the French King was lost had the intrigues of a mistress of the robes and a bedchamber-woman suffered the Great Captain to remain two years longer in power — Walpole threw up his place with the Duke, and nobly refused to join some shuffling place-seeking Whigs, who were talked over by Harley and St. John to remain under the Tories. This was an offence not to be forgiven. His aggravation of it, by boldly defending the conduct of Marlborough against the slanderous attacks of the adverse faction, produced the charge against him of corruption while at the War-Office; and he was sent to the Tower upon an accusation of having received 900*l.* from a contractor; was expelled the House of Com-

mons, though never either impeached or prosecuted ; and, on being re-elected in the same Parliament, was declared ineligible by a majority of the House.

That Walpole, through the whole of this proceeding, was regarded as the victim of party rancour ; that but for the factious spirit of the day he never would have been accused ; that nothing can be less decisive against any one than a vote carried by a majority of twelve in a full House of Commons, in which many of the adverse party voted with the accused, and many more refused to vote at all ; and that the greatest distrust of their case was shown by the accusers in never venturing to institute judicial proceedings of any kind — may all be easily admitted ; and yet there rests a stain upon this part of Walpole's public conduct. For what was his defence ? Not to deny that the contractors had given two notes, one of 500 guineas, and the other of as many pounds (of which all but 100 were paid), but to affirm that they were only paid through Walpole's hand to a friend named Mann, whom he had meant to favour by giving him a share of the contract, and who had agreed to take so much for his share of the profit. Mann was dead ; the contractors had made the notes payable to Walpole in ignorance of Mann's name, and only knowing he was put upon them as a friend of the Minister ; and thus a case of fraud and suspicion appeared against the latter, which the unfortunate accident of the former's death prevented from being clearly removed. Now, that such a proceeding, admitting it to have been as Walpole himself describes it, would in our purer days have been deemed most incorrect, nay, sufficient to stain the character of any minister, cannot be doubted. In those days the course of office seems to have sanctioned such impropriety ; and that no man was ever injured by having so behaved, any more than the reputations of some French ministers seem to be the worse for the wear they undergo on the Stock Exchange, must be obvious from the fact of Walpole having, in four years after, been placed at the head of the Treasury, though without the place of Premier ; and afterwards become, and continued head of the Government for nearly the whole residue of his life, with no diminution of his influence or his estimation in consequence of the transaction at the War-Office, and with hardly any allusion ever made to that remarkable passage of his life, during the many years of the most factious opposition which his long administration encountered, when, for want of the materials of attack, it was seriously urged against him that so long a tenure of power by one man was detrimental to the state, if not dangerous to the constitution. Nothing can more strikingly show the great improvement which the principles of public men and the practice of the constitution have undergone during the last hundred years.

When he quitted office, a charge of a different complexion, though connected with pecuniary malversation, was made against the ve-

teran statesman. A sum of between 17,000*l.* and 18,000*l.* had been received by him upon two Treasury orders, two days before he resigned, in February, 1741-2; and to raise the money before the Exchequer forms could be gone through, they were pawned with the officer of the Bank. Now, Walpole never would give a detailed explanation of this transaction, but began to draw up a vindication of himself, alleging that the money was taken, with the King's approbation, for the public service. This paper is extant, but unfinished; and it consists of a clear and distinct statement of the course of the Exchequer in issuing money, from which the inference is, that no one can appropriate any sum to himself in defiance of or escape from so many guards and checks. This, however, is a lame defence, when the receipt of the money by him is admitted. The reason offered for his desisting from the completion of the paper is, that he must either leave it incomplete, or betray the secret service of the crown. And it may be admitted that, except the suspicion arising from the date of the transaction, there is nothing in it more than an ordinary dealing with secret service money.

The general charge of peculation grounded on the comparison of his expenditure with his means, appears more difficult to meet. With a fortune originally of about 2000*l.* a-year, and which never rose to more than double that amount, he lived with a profusion amounting to extravagance; insomuch that one of his yearly meetings at Houghton, "the Congress" as it was called, in autumn, and which lasted six or eight weeks, and was attended by all his supporters in either House and by their friends, cost him 3000*l.* a-year. His buildings and purchases were estimated at 200,000*l.*, and to this must be added 40,000*l.* for pictures. Now, it is true that for many years he had his own official income of 3000*l.*, with 2000*l.* more of a sinecure, and his family had between 3000*l.* and 4000*l.* more, in places of the like description.¹ Still, if the expensive style of his living be considered, and that his income was at the very outside only 12,000*l.* clear, including the places of his sons, it is quite impossible to understand how above 200,000*l.*, or nearly twice the average value of his whole private property, could have been accumulated by savings. His incumbrances were only paid off by his wife's fortune; his gains upon the fortunate sale of his South-Sea stock, just before the fall, could hardly account for the sum, although he states, in a letter to one of his friends, that he got a thousand per cent. on what he purchased. On the whole, we must be content to admit that some cloud hangs over this part of his history; and that the generally prevailing attacks against him in this quarter have not been so successfully repulsed.

It has been much more universally believed, that he carried on the Government with a profuse application of the influence derived from patronage; and that the most open bribery entered largely

¹ 2000*l.*, granted in reversion only, did not fall in till 1737.

into his plan of parliamentary management. That in those days the men were far less pure who filled the highest places in the State, and that parliamentary as well as ministerial virtue was pitched upon a lower scale than it happily has been, since a prying and fearless press and a watchful public scrutinized the conduct of all persons in any situation of trust, may be at once admitted. It is a truth which has been repeatedly asserted in these papers; and if any decisive proof of it were required, it is the proof we have in the universally known fact, that the combinations of political party now proceed so much more upon principle than upon personal connexions; or when they are framed upon the latter, the pretext of principle is always used to cloak over arrangements which the improved character of the times will no longer suffer to meet the light. It may be further granted, that the period of Walpole's power was one likely to introduce extraordinary forces into the political system, since the stake was not always a ministry alone, but oftentimes also a crown. When such is the game, measures are readily resorted to, which, in the ordinary measures or matches of politicians, would be reluctantly if at all adopted. That it was usual in those days for men out of office who had voted with the Government during the session, and had obtained no promotion, nor any other favours, to receive sums of money—whether as a token of ministerial gratitude, or as a reimbursement of their expenses in attending parliament—has been so often asserted, and in some instances with such detailed particulars, that it seems to pass for one of the usual modes of House of Commons' management—pretty much like the shares (technically called *slices*) of loans distributed among persons in certain offices.¹ But we may safely assert, that Sir Robert Walpole's reputation for having carried on the Government with unprecedented corruption rests on no better ground than his open and honest way of avowing the more accustomed exercise of patronage, and his reflections, rather merry than well considered, on the nature of political men—which gave rise to the notion, that he held statesmen as more venal than others had believed them to be. His famous saying, that "all men have their price," can prove nothing unless "price" be defined; and, if a large and liberal sense is given to the word, the proposition more resembles a truism than a sneer, or an ebullition of official misanthropy: But it has been positively affirmed that the remark never was made; for it is said that an important word is omitted, which

¹ Some notion of the free use made in those days of the current coin as a political agent, may be gathered from the fact which Shippen himself related to the celebrated Dr. Middleton. The Prince of Wales, to testify his satisfaction with a speech which the sturdy old Jacobite had made, sent him 1000*l.* by General Churchill, Groom of his Bedchamber. Shippen refused it. That Walpole himself had known of similar attempts made on Shippen's honesty by the Hanoverian party, is pretty evident from his well-known saying respecting that honest man—"I won't say who is corrupt, but who is not corruptible I will say, and that is Mr. Shippen."

wholly changes the sense; and that Walpole only said, in reference to certain factious or profligate adversaries, and their adherents resembling themselves, "all *these* men have their price."¹ His general tone of sarcasm, when speaking of patriotism and political gratitude, and others of the more fleeting virtues, is well known. "Patriots," he said, "are easily raised; I have myself made many a one. 'Tis but to refuse an unreasonable demand, and up springs a patriot." So the gratitude of political men he defined to be "a lively sense of favours to come." The opinion of mankind which such speeches as these imported made Pope say, —

"Would he oblige me? Let me only find
He does not think me what he thinks mankind."

But if it is certain that his low estimate of public virtue, always openly, perhaps too openly, expressed, tended to lower men's estimate of his own, by making them suppose that he was likely to act upon his notions of those he had to deal with, it is at least equally clear, that the question more fit to be asked before we condemn him of exaggerated misanthropy, is,—Whether or not he very greatly erred in the mean opinion of others which he had formed? No one who has been long the dispenser of patronage among large bodies of his fellow-citizens can fail to see infinitely more numerous instances of sordid, selfish, greedy, ungrateful conduct, than of the virtues to which such hateful qualities stand opposed. Daily examples come before him of the most unfeeling acrimony towards competitors,—the most far-fetched squeamish jealousy of all conflicting claims—unblushing falsehood in both its branches, boasting and detraction—grasping selfishness in both kinds, greedy pursuit of men's own bread, and cold calculating upon others' blood—the fury of disappointment when that has not been done which it was impossible to do—swift oblivion of all that has been granted—unreasonable expectation of more, only because much has been given—not seldom favours repaid with hatred and ill treatment, as if by this unnatural course the account might be settled between gratitude and pride—such are the secrets of the human heart which power soon discloses to its possessor: add to these, that which, however, deceives no one—the never-ceasing hypocrisy of declaring, that whatever is most eagerly sought is only coveted as affording the means of serving the country, and will only be taken at the sacrifice of individual interest to the sense of public duty; and I desire to be understood here as speaking from my own official experience. It is not believed that in our own times men are at all worse than they were a century ago. Why then should we suppose that one who had been Prime Minister for twenty years, and in office five or six more, had arrived at his notion of human nature from a misanthropical disposition rather than from his personal experience, a larger one than I possessed?

¹ Coxe's Life of Walpole, vol. i. p. 757.

But still more unjust is the inference which is drawn even from a supposition of exaggerated misanthropy, that because he thought less favourably of men than they deserved—therefore he had ministered to their corruptions, and availed himself of their frailties. A far more rigorous test was applied to his conduct than any other minister ever underwent. His whole proceedings were unsparingly attacked towards the close of his reign, by a motion personally directed against him, supported with the most acrimonious zeal, and preceded by the minutest inquiry into all his weak points. In the House, when he was present to meet the charge of corruption, none was made; after he had ceased to rule, a committee sat for weeks to investigate his conduct. The result of the inquiry was the charge already adverted to; and a futile statement of his having offered a place to the mayor of a borough, and a living to that magistrate's brother, in order to influence an election. In the great debate on Sandys's motion, a proud testimony to his pure administration of one most important branch of the public service was borne by Sir C. Wager, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who declared that, during the nine years he had presided over the Navy, Sir Robert had never once recommended any one for promotion; adding, that had he done so, he, the Admiral, would have thrown up his employments. It may well be doubted if all the successors, either at the Treasury or the Admiralty, have been equally pure in their high offices. Undue interference with men's parliamentary conduct, by removing those who had voted against him, was of course charged upon him and hardly denied; but it is a proceeding which ministers are as often praised for as blamed; it is accounted the use of legitimate influence to support the government. He loudly denied that ever a threat had been employed by him to deter men from voting according to their conscientious opinions; and when all were challenged to convict him of such a course, none offered to accuse.

Having cleared away the ground from the entanglements with which contemporary prejudices and interests had encumbered it, we may now the more distinctly perceive the merits of this great statesman; and we shall easily admit that he was one of the ablest, wisest, safest rulers who ever bore sway in this country. Inferior to many in qualities that dazzle the multitude, and undervaluing the mere outward accomplishments of English statesmanship, nay, accounting them as merits only so far as they conduced to parliamentary and to popular influence—and even much undervaluing their effects in that direction—Walpole yet ranks in the very highest class of those whose unvarying prudence, clear apprehension, fertility of resources to meet unexpected difficulties, firmness of purpose, just and not seemingly exaggerated self-confidence, point them out by common consent as the men qualified to guide the course of human affairs, to ward off public dangers, and to watch over the peace of empires.¹

¹ It is gratifying to me that I can conscientiously rank Lord Melbourne among

His knowledge was sound and practical; it was like all his other qualities, for use and not for ornament; yet he lacked nothing of the information which in his day formed the provision of the politician. With men his acquaintance was extensive, and it was profound. His severe judgments, the somewhat misanthropic bias to which reference has been made, never misled him; it only put him on his guard; and it may safely be affirmed that no man ever made fewer mistakes in his intercourse with either adversaries, or friends, or the indifferent world.

From these great qualities it resulted, that a better or a more successful minister could not preside over any country in times of peace; and, if we are unable to conjecture how far his sagacity, his boldness, his prudent circumspection, his quickness of apprehension, would have sufficed to make him as great a war minister, we have to thank his wise and virtuous policy, which, steadfast in desiring peace, and his matchless skill, which, in the most difficult circumstances, happily securing the execution of his grand purpose, have left us only to conjecture what the last of national calamities could alone have shown. Nor had he ordinary circumstances to contend against, or ordinary men, in the undeviating pursuit of peace, which made his course so truly useful and so really brilliant. The impatience of France to recover her power and her military reputation, dimmed by the wars of William and of Anne; the Spanish politics, complicated beyond their usual degree of entanglement; Austria, alternately exposed to danger of being conquered, and putting the balance of Europe to hazard by her ambition and her intrigues, never perhaps active or formidable at any other period of her history; Prussia, rising into powerful influence, and menacing Germany with conquest; the great capacity of the Regent Orleans, his inexhaustible resources of address, his manly courage, his profligate character; the habitual insincerity and deep cunning of Fleury, whose pacific disposition, nevertheless, made him Walpole's natural ally—such were the difficulties and the adversaries among which he had to steer the vessel committed to his care; while he had to thwart his councils at home, the King, first the father and then the son, constantly bent upon projects of ambition, reckoning conquest the only occupation worthy of princes, war their natural element, and peace an atmosphere in which they can scarcely breathe. It may be added to this, and it forms a higher eulogy still on this great statesman, that beside the opposition to his wise and virtuous policy which he encountered among courtiers and colleagues, often misled by the public impatience, not seldom taking their tone from the Sovereign, an opposition even broke out publicly in high and unexpected quarters; for the Chancellor himself,¹ on one occasion, made a warlike ha-

those to whom this description applies in most of its essential points. His faults belong to others; his merits are his own.

¹ When Lord Hardwicke, carried away by the national enthusiasm beyond his

range on quitting the woolsack to address the Lords. A constant feeling of national pride and national prejudice was operating against France, in hatred or jealousy of French alliance, in dislike even of peace itself. The deep-rooted prejudices of the English people never set in more strongly against their French neighbours than during Walpole's administration. One-half the country, albeit friends of the Pretender, hated them because they were French; the other half, both because they were French, and because they were adverse to the Hanoverian settlement. The soreness felt ever since the interests of the country and all the fruits of her most glorious actions had been sacrificed at Utrecht, continued to gall the nation, and make it desirous of regaining by arms the footing which politics had lost; and during the long administration of Walpole there hardly passed a year in which the public eye was not jealously pointed to some quarter of the world, remote or near, as offering a reason why the public voice should be raised for war. It was this general tide of public opinion, as well as the under current of royal and courtly inclination, that Walpole had to stem for many a long year. He did stem it; gallantly he kept the vessel to her course; and he was not driven from the helm by the combined clamours of the mob and intrigues of party, until after he had secured the incalculable blessing of a repose without example for all the great interests committed to his charge.

If after so long a struggle he at length gave way, it must be remembered that the whole country was with the King, and the Court determined upon the Spanish war—one of the greatest blots in English history. Walpole's opposition to it was strenuous, and it was unavailing. He tendered his resignation to the King, and the King refused to accept it, passionately asking his minister "Whether he would desert him at his greatest need?" He then laid his commands on him to remain, and unluckily for his reputation Walpole obeyed. Had he persisted in resigning, he might not have been able to prevent the catastrophe, but he would have saved himself from the reproach of superintending councils which he no longer directed; he would have been spared four years of continued mortifications; and his name would have remained to all posterity without a single blot to checker its lustre.

That he had at all times, in the conduct of foreign affairs, fearlessly counselled the Crown, and without the least regard to personal feelings spoken out like a man the whole truth in the closet, where such sounds so seldom are echoed from the walls, no doubt whatever exists.

Early in George I.'s reign he resisted vigorously his pressing desire for measures against Prussia, on account of a Mecklenburg quarrel, in which the Elector of Hanover took a very vehement

accustomed moderation and even gentleness of speech, was declaiming with vehemence on the Spanish depredations in 1739, Walpole, standing on the throne, said to those near him. "Bravo, Colonel Yorke! bravo!"

part : he absolutely refused him money too, and was reproached by the King for breach of his promise. His answer was, though respectful, yet firm, and it was sincere. He would not dispute, he said, the assertion of his Majesty ; but if he had ever made such a promise, he was wholly unable to recollect it. To the rapacity of the German favourites he offered so firm a resistance that he was the abhorrence and detestation of them all, both men and women. When George was, five years after, bent upon opposing the Czar's attempts in favour of the Duke of Holstein's views upon the Swedish throne, Walpole plainly and firmly explained his views, refused the sum demanded, and so impressed the King with the wisdom of his pacific policy, that he joined him against all his other ministers, both English and German. With George II. he held the same honest, independent course ; insomuch that at one time the King's displeasure rose to the height of making it impossible for Queen Caroline, his steady supporter, to defend, or even name him in her husband's presence. Her only means of assuaging the Royal anger was to ascribe the minister's peaceful, or, as the King termed it, unworthy and feeble policy, to his brother Horace's influence over his mind on all foreign matters. His remonstrances against " the petty Germanic schemes " of that prince were unremitting ; and once he had the courage to tell him how much " the welfare of his own dominions and the happiness of Europe depended on his being a great king rather than a considerable elector ! " If such a speech was likely to be little palatable to his Electoral Highness, still less pleasing must have been the remark which the same honest minister ventured to make on one of the many occasions when the implacable hatred of the House of Brunswick towards that of Brandenburg broke out. " Will your Majesty engage in an enterprise which must prove both disgraceful and disadvantageous ? Why, Hanover will be no more than a breakfast to the Prussian army." ¹

In commemorating the inestimable service which Walpole's pacific policy rendered to his country and the world, strict justice required us to enumerate the obstacles which were offered to his wise and honest course. The other great service which he rendered to his country, was the securing of the Protestant succession ;—invaluable, not merely as excluding the plague of the Romish hierarchy and Romish superstition, but as perpetuating the settlement of the Revolution ; by which the right of the people to discard their rulers, and to choose such as will protect, not destroy, their li-

¹ The only serious objection ever urged against Sir Robert's foreign policy, his suffering the Emperor (Charles VI.) to encounter much hazard from Spain and France rather than actively aid him in his measures, and thus raising France at Austria's expense, has long since faded from the memory of all reflecting men, as a wholly groundless charge. In fact, although Charles was so incensed at our conduct respecting the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction, as at times to be in a state of mental derangement, it is certain that by no other course could war with France, and a general war in Europe, have been avoided.

erties, was recognised and acted upon. Then Walpole had to struggle, not only against the intrigues of the exiled family, sometimes openly, always secretly favoured by France, but against a majority of the landed interest in England, perhaps in Scotland, certainly in Ireland—a majority in number as well as in value of the whole people. The accession of George I. had added to the weight of the Stuart party all those whom that prince excluded from his favour, by the policy which he from the first pursued of placing himself at the head of a party. The appearance among us of a foreigner to exercise all the functions of royalty, cooled the loyalty of some natural friends, while it converted many indifferent persons into enemies. Above all, the inroad of a foreign court, foreign mistresses, foreign favourites, all insatiable of English gold as soon as they reached the land of promise, created a degree of discontent, and even of disgust, which mightily increased the prevailing tendency to regret the sway of a native family. In this state of things did Walpole prove himself a match for the extreme difficulties of his position. By his universal and accurate intelligence, he was constantly aware of every design that was plotting in every corner of Europe, from Stockholm to Naples, by the restless intrigues of the exiled family—aware of them long before they had time for ripening into mischief—aware of them, generally speaking, from the very first movement in any of their most secret councils. There was not, too, a family in the British dominions whose leanings he was not acquainted with, and whose relations, if they had any, with the Pretender, he did not know. This knowledge he used without ever abusing it: he acted upon it for the safety of the State, without ever once bringing it to bear against the parties, or deriving from it the means of injuring, or of annoying, or of humbling his adversaries. The fact is well known, that he was possessed of proofs which would have ruined more than one of them. Shippen, among others, knew he was in his antagonist's power; but that antagonist never prevented him from honestly pursuing the course of his violent and indeed very factious opposition. It must be further observed, in honour of Walpole's wisdom and firmness, that when the Protestant succession was endangered by foreign movements on the part of the Pretender, his all but invincible repugnance to warlike measures gave way to a provident spirit of wary precaution; and he at once both in his foreign negotiations with Holland and Germany, and in his vigorous preparations for war with France, showed his resolute determination to defend at all hazards the Revolution settlement, and to punish those who would molest it.

The financial administration of Walpole has been deservedly commended by all but the zealots of a faction. Every one has admitted the great improvements which he introduced into that department. A single measure by which he repealed above a hundred export duties, and nearly forty on imported articles, was only part

of his system ; which was clearly before his age, and therefore exposed him to the usual clamour raised against original thinkers on state affairs. He held that raw commodities for manufactures, and articles of necessity for consumption, should be relieved from all taxes ; that the impost upon land should be reduced as far as possible ; that the revenue collected from the customs, being liable to evasions by contraband trade, should be transferred to the excise ; and that articles of luxury should thus be more securely and economically made to bear the burdens of the public expenditure. Every one knows the clamour which the great measure of the Excise, the principal illustration of his doctrine, encountered. His reason for relinquishing it is not discreditable to him. He had carried it by majorities always decreasing ; and, when finally the majority was under twenty, he gave it up on ascertaining that the people were so generally set against it that the aid of troops would be required to collect it. " No revenue," said this constitutional minister, " ought to be levied in this free country that it requires the sabre and the bayonet to collect." A learned and eminently narrow-minded man, hating Walpole for his Revolution principles, has not scrupled to record his own factious folly in the definition of *Excise* given in his dictionary. Another, a greater, a more factious, and a less honest man, helped, and much less impotently helped, to clamour down the only other part of Walpole's domestic administration which has ever been made the subject of open attack ; though doubtless the extinction of Jacobitism was the real, but hidden, object of all these invectives ;—I mean Dean Swift, whose promotion in the church he had prevented, upon discovering the most glaring acts of base perfidy on the part of that unprincipled wit ; and whose revenge was taken against the provision made, rather by Walpole's predecessors than himself, for supplying a copper coinage to Ireland, upon terms to the trader perfectly fair, and to the country sufficiently advantageous. The '*Drapier's Letters*,' one of his most famous and by far his most popular productions, the act of his life, he was accustomed to confess, upon which rests his whole Irish popularity—and no name ever retained its estimation in the mind of the Irish people nearly so long—urged his countrymen to reject these halfpence ; it being, the very reverend author solemnly asserted, " their first duty to God next to the salvation of their souls ; " and he asserted, impudently asserted, that the coin was only worth a twelfth of its nominal value. Impudently, I repeat, and why ?—Because a careful assay was immediately made at the English mint, by the Master of the Mint, and the result was to ascertain that the standard weight was justly proved. And who was that Master ? None other than Sir Isaac Newton. The calumnies and the ribaldry of the Dean prevailed over the experiments of the illustrious philosopher, and the coinage was withdrawn from circulation.¹

¹ An Irish writer of incoherent mathematical papers in our own day attacks Sir

The private character of Walpole is familiarly known; and all contemporary writers join in giving the same impression of it. Open, honest, unaffected, abounding in kindness, overflowing with good-humour, generous to profusion, hospitable to a fault, in his manners easy to excess—no wonder that the ruler of the country should have won all hearts by qualities which would have made a private gentleman the darling of society. With these merits, however, were joined defects or weaknesses, which broke in somewhat upon the respect that severe judges require a great statesman to be compassed with round about. His mirth was somewhat free, and apt to be coarse; and he patronised boisterous hilarity in the society which he frequented, and at the merry meetings which were the relaxation of his life. He regarded not the decorum which sober habits sustain; and he followed, in respect of convivial enjoyments, rather the fashion of his own day than of ours. He indulged, too, in gallantry more than be seemed either his station or his years; and he had, like a celebrated contemporary¹ of his, the weakness of affecting to be less strictly virtuous in this respect than he was, and considerably more successful in his pursuit of such recreations. This mixture of honest openness and scorn of hypocrisy, with some little tendency to boast of fortune's favours, made the only trait like an exception to the wholly plain and unaffected nature of the man. Nor is it easy to define with accuracy how much was affectation, and how much ought to be set down to the account of a merely joyous and frank temper. The delight which all persons, of whatever age or cast, took in his society, is admitted by every witness.

Of Sir Robert Walpole's character as an orator, or rather a great master of debate, it is of course at this distance of time, and with so little help from the parliamentary history of the day, not easy to speak with confidence or discrimination; because we must rely on the estimate formed by others, and handed down to us, with few indeed of the materials on which their judgment rested. That he despised not only all affectation and all refinements, but all the resources of the oratorical art beyond its great "origin and fountain," strong sense, clear ideas, anxious devotion to the object in view, carrying the audience along with the speaker, may well be supposed from the manly and plain, the homely and somewhat coarse, character of his understanding. Eminently a man of business, he came down to Parliament to do the business of the country, and he did it. He excelled in lucid statement, whether of an argument or of facts; he met his antagonist fearlessly, and went through every part

Isaac Newton as a "Saxon," and a "driveller;" and he is not treated in Ireland with universal scorn.

¹ Louis XIV., when some one was recounting his nephew the Duc d'Orleans's (afterward Regent's) foibles and vices, said, in language much eulogized by St. Simon, who relates the anecdote,—"Encore est-il fanfaron de vices qu'il n'a point."

of the question ; he was abundantly ready at reply and at retort ; he constantly preserved his temper, was even well-natured and gay in the midst of all his difficulties ; and possessed his constitutional good-humour, with his unvaried presence of mind, in the thickest fire of the debate, be it ever so vehement, ever so personal, as entirely as if he were in his office, or his study, or the common circle of his friends. He was, too, a lively, and not ever a tiresome, speaker ; nor did any man, hardly Lord North himself, enjoy the position—to any debater very enviable, to a minister the most enviable of all—that of a constant favourite with the House which it was his vocation to lead. Such is the general account left us of his speaking, and on this all witnesses are agreed.

It may be added, that his style was homely, for the most part ; and his manner, though animated and lively, yet by no means affecting dignity. In figures of speech he but rarely indulged, though his language seems to have been often distinguished by point. His personal retorts, though hardly ever offensive, were often distinguished by much force of invective and considerable felicity of sarcasm. His description of the factious and motley opposition, moved by the dark intrigues of Bolingbroke, and his portrait of that wily and subtle adversary, appears to have been a passage of great merit, as far as the conception went ; for of the execution we cannot in fairness permit ourselves to judge from the only record of it which is preserved, the meagre parliamentary remains of those days. The excellence of this celebrated speech, which eventually drove Bolingbroke abroad, is greatly enhanced by the important circumstance of its being an unpremeditated reply to a very elaborate attack upon himself, in which Sir William Windham had feigned a case applicable to Walpole's, and under that cover drawn a severe portrait of him.

Notwithstanding the general plainness and simplicity of his style, some speeches remain distinguished by a highly ornamental and even figurative manner ; that, for example, in opposition to the Peerage Bill, in which he spoke of the ancients having erected the temple of honour behind the temple of virtue, to show by what avenues it must be approached ; whereas we were called upon to provide that its only avenue should be an obscure family pedigree, or the winding-sheet of some worthless ancestor. Some idea of his more animated and successful efforts may be formed, and it is a very high one, from the admirable exordium of his speech in reply to the long series of attacks upon him which Sandys's motion for his removal, in 1741, introduced. There remain of this speech only his own minutes, yet even from these its great merits appear clear. "Whatever is the conduct of England, I am equally arraigned. If we maintain ourselves in peace, and seek no share in foreign transactions, we are reproached with tameness and pusillanimity. If we interfere in disputes, we are called Don Quixotes and dupes to

all the world. If we contract (give) guarantees, it is asked why the nation is wantonly burdened. If guarantees are declined, we are reproached with having no allies."

In general, his manner was simple, and even familiar, with a constant tendency towards gaiety. But of this his finest speech it is recorded, that the delivery was most fascinating, and of a dignity rarely surpassed. In vehemence of declamation he seldom indulged, and anything very violent was foreign to his habits at all times. Yet sometimes he deviated from this course; and once spoke under such excitement (on the motion respecting Lord Cadogan's conduct, 1717) that the blood burst from his nose, and he had to quit the House. But for this accidental relief, he probably would have afforded a singular instance of a speaker, always good-humoured and easy in his delivery beyond almost any other, dropping down dead in his declamation, from excess of vehemence: and at this time he was between forty and fifty years of age.

But before proceeding to Walpole's great adversary, Bolingbroke, here I may pause to state why so large, as it may appear so disproportioned, a space has been allotted to Walpole, the centre figure in this group. It is because there is nothing more wholesome, for both the people and their rulers, than to dwell upon the excellence of those statesmen whose lives have been spent in furthering the useful, the sacred, work of peace. • The thoughtless vulgar are ever prone to magnify the brilliant exploits of arms, which dazzle ordinary understandings, and prevent any account being taken of the cost and the crime that so often are hid in the guise of success. All merit of that shining kind is sure of passing current for more than it is really worth; and the eye is turned indifferently, and even scornfully, upon the unpretending virtue of the true friend to his species, the minister who devotes all his cares to stay the worst of crimes that can be committed, the last of calamities that can be endured, by man. To hold up such men as Walpole in the face of the world as the model of a wise, a safe, an honest ruler, becomes the most sacred duty of the impartial historian; and, as has been said of Cicero and of eloquence by a great critic, that statesman may feel assured that he has made progress in the science to which his life is devoted, who shall heartily admire the public character of Walpole.

LORD BOLINGBROKE.

Few men, whose public life was so short, have filled a greater space in the eyes of the world during his own times than Lord Bolingbroke, or left behind them a more brilliant reputation. Not

more than fifteen years elapsed between his first coming into Parliament and his attainder; during not more than ten of these years was he brought forward in the course of its proceedings; and yet as a statesman and an orator his name ranks among the most famous in our history, independently of the brilliant literary reputation which places him among the first classics of what we generally call our Augustan age. Much of his rhetorical fame may certainly be ascribed to the merit of his written works; but had he never composed a page, he would still have come down to our times as one of the most able and eloquent men of whom this country ever could boast. As it is upon his eloquence that his great reputation now rests, as upon that mainly was built his political influence, and as upon it alone any commendation of his political character must proceed, we shall do well to begin by examining the foundation before we look at the superstructure.

And here the defect, so often to be deplored in contemplating the history of modern oratory, attains its very height. Meagre as are the materials by which we can aim at forming to ourselves some idea of the eloquence of most men who flourished before our own day; scanty as are the remains even of the speakers who figured during the Seven Years' War, and the earlier part of the American contest; when we go back to the administration of Walpole, we find those vestiges to be yet more thinly scattered over the pages of our history; and in Queen Anne's time, during which alone Bolingbroke spoke, there are absolutely none. It is correct to affirm that of this great orator—one of the very greatest, according to all contemporary history that ever exercised the art, and these accounts are powerfully supported by his writings—not a spoken sentence remains, any more than of the speeches of Demades,¹ one of the most eloquent of the Greeks, any more than of Cicero's translation from Demosthenes, or the lost works of Livy and of Tacitus. The contemplation of this chasm it was that made Mr. Pitt, when musing upon its brink, and calling to mind all that might be fancied of the orator from the author, and all that traditional testimony had handed down to us, sigh after a "speech of Bolingbroke,"—desiderating it far more than the restoration of all that has perished of the treasures of the ancient world.

But, although we may well join in these unavailing regrets, attempt vainly to supply the want by our conjectures, and confess our ignorance of the peculiar character of his oratory, the fact of its mighty power is involved in no doubt at all. The concurring testimony of all parties leaves this a matter absolutely certain. The friends and supporters of Walpole, to whom his whole life was hostile, all his acts, his speeches, and his writings, are here agreed

¹ The fragment given in some *codices* as his appears of more than doubtful authenticity. The finest portion is taken from a very well-known passage in Demosthenes.

with the friends, the associates of Bolingbroke; and no diversity of shade marks the pictures which have come down to us from the hand of the antagonist and of the panegyrist. His most intimate companion, Dean Swift, may be suspected of partiality when he represents him as "having in his hands half the business of the nation, and the applause of the whole;" but when he tells us that "understanding men of both parties asserted he had never been equalled in speaking," and that he had "an invincible eloquence, with a most agreeable elocution," we can find no fault with the exaggeration, for this account falls short of what others have told. In truth, his impression upon the men of his own age may well be conceived to have been prodigious, when we reflect that hardly any English orator can now be cited as having flourished before his time. This circumstance might even detract from the weight of contemporary testimony in his favour, if we had not more specific reasons for believing implicitly in it than the mere concurrence of general reputation.

He had received at Eton a complete classical education; rather, let us say, had laid there the foundation of one, which, like all others who have shone as scholars, he afterwards completed. But his attention was more bestowed upon the remains of Rome than of Athens; he was extensively and thoroughly acquainted with Latin writers, as indeed his frequent quotation of passages little known may show. With Greek literature he seems not to have been familiar; nor can the reader of his own works fail to perceive that his style is not so redolent of the flowers which grew in the more rigorous climate of the Attic school. With the authors of the age immediately preceding his own—the true Augustan age of English letters—he was well acquainted; and, although his style is quite his own, none being more original, it is impossible to doubt that he had much studied and much admired (as who can stint himself in admiring?) the matchless prose of Dryden—rich, various, natural, animated, pointed, lending itself to the logical and the narrative, as well as the pathetic and the picturesque, never balking, never cloying, never wearying. To the literature of ancient and modern times he added a consummate knowledge of their history, and indeed appears of this to have made his principal study; for of natural science he was no professor, and his metaphysical writings have gained but little fame. Yet, that he was a profound moralist, had thoroughly studied the sources of human action, was well acquainted with the nature and habits of the mind, and had an understanding both adapted by its natural acuteness to take part in the most subtle discussions, as well as habituated to them by study, it would be absurd to doubt, merely because his metaphysical speculations have been unsuccessful, as it would be the height of unworthy prejudice to deny, merely because his opinions are tinged with scepticism, and because an unhappy veil of infidelity dark-

ened his life, while it shrouded his posthumous works. They who look down upon even the purely ethical and purely metaphysical writings of Bolingbroke would do well to show us any statesman or any orator, except perhaps Cicero, who in any age has brought to the senate the same resources of moral science which even the failures of Bolingbroke as a professed author on these subjects, prove him to have possessed; and it is hardly necessary to remark how vast an accession of force to his eloquence, whether in its argumentative, its pathetic, or its declamatory department, would have been gained by even far less skill, capacity, or practice, than he had as a moral philosopher, a student of the nature of the mind, or an expert logician.

Accordingly, when all these accomplishments, joined to his strong natural sagacity, his penetrating acuteness, his extraordinary quickness of apprehension, a clearness of understanding, against which sophistry set itself up in vain, as the difficulties of the most complicated subject in vain opposed his industry and his courage; with a fancy rich, lively, various beyond that of most men, a wit exuberant and sparkling, a vehemence of passion belonging to his whole temperament, even to his physical powers—came to be displayed before the assembly which he was to address; and when the mighty "*Armamentaria Cœli*" were found under the command of one whose rich endowments of mind; and whose ample stores of acquired virtue resided in a person of singular grace, animated a countenance at once beautiful and expressive, and made themselves heard in the strains of an unrivalled voice, it is easy to comprehend how vast, how irresistible must have been their impression. That is easy; but unhappily all we can now obtain is the apprehension that it must have been prodigious, without being able ourselves to penetrate the veil that hides it, or to form any very distinct notion of its peculiar kind. For the purpose of approximating to this knowledge, it is necessary that we should now consider the style of his written discourse; because, although in general the difference is great between the same man's writings and his oratory (witness the memorable example of Mr. Fox, who, however, increased the diversity by writing on a system, and a bad one;—yet in some this difference is much less than in others, and there seems abundant reason to believe that in Bolingbroke's case it was as inconsiderable as in any other.

If we inquire on what models Bolingbroke formed his style, the result will be, as in the case of all other great and original writers, that he was rather imbued with the general taste and relish of former authors than imitated any of them. That he had filled his mind with the mighty exemplars of antiquity is certain—for, though of Greek he had small store, with the Latin classics he was familiar, and habitually so, as his allusions and his quotations constantly show. As might be supposed in one of his strong sense, knowledge

of man and of men, as well as free habits, Horace seems to have been his favourite; but the historians also are plainly of his intimate society. Among modern authors he appears to have had Dryden's prose, and the admirable composition of Shaftesbury, most in his mind. The resemblance of manner may indeed be frequently found with these excellent models—of whom the former, with Bolingbroke himself, may perhaps be admitted to stand at the head of all our great masters of diction. But though in vigour, in freedom, occasionally in rhythm also, in variety that never palls nor ever distracts from the subject, in copiousness that speaks an exhaustless fountain for its source, nothing can surpass Dryden; yet must it be confessed that Bolingbroke is more terse, more condensed where closeness is required, more epigrammatic, and of the highest order of epigram, which has its point not in the words but the thoughts; and when, even in the thoughts, it is so subdued as to be the minister of the composer, and not his master—helping the explication, or the argument, or the invective, without appearing to be the main purpose of the composition. In another and a material respect he also greatly excels Dryden; there is nothing flowery in any part of his writings; he always respects his reader, his subject, and himself, too much to throw out matter in a crude and half-finished form, at least as far as diction is concerned: for the structure of his works is anything rather than finished and systematic. Even his tract 'On Parties,' which he calls a *Dissertation*, though certainly his most elaborate work, perhaps also the most admirably written, has as little of an orderly methodical exposition of principles, or statement of reasonings, as can well be imagined. It is a series of letters addressed to a political paper, abounding in acute, sagacious, often profound reflections, with forcible arguments much happy illustration, constant references to history, many attacks upon existing parties; but nothing can be less like what we commonly term a *Dissertation*. The same remark applies to almost all his writings. He is clear, strong, copious; he is never methodical; the subject is attacked in various ways; it is taken up by the first end that presents itself, and it is handled skilfully, earnestly, and strikingly, in many of its parts; it cannot be said to be thoroughly gone through, though it be powerfully gone into; in short, it is discussed as if a speaker of great power, rather than a writer, were engaged upon it; and accordingly nothing can be more clear than that Bolingbroke's works convey to us the idea of a prodigious orator rather than of a very great and regular writer. When Mr. Burke asked, "Who now reads Bolingbroke?" he paved the way for another equally natural exclamation, "What would we not give to hear him?" and this was Mr. Pitt's opinion, when, as has already been observed, the question being raised in conversation about the *desiderata* most to be lamented, and one said the lost books of Livy, another those of Tacitus, a third a Latin tragedy—he at once de-

clared for "A Speech of Bolingbroke." Nor is it the method—rather the want of method—the easy and natural order in which the topics follow one another, not taken up on a plan, but each, as it were, growing out of its immediate predecessor, that makes his writings so closely resemble spoken compositions. The diction is most eminently that of oratorical works. It is bold, rapid, animated, natural, and racy, yet pointed and correct, bearing the closest scrutiny of the critic, when submitted to the eye in the hour of calm judgment; but admirably calculated to fill the ear, and carry away the feelings in the moment of excitement. If Bolingbroke spoke as he wrote, he must have been the greatest of modern orators, as far as composition goes; for he has the raciness and spirit, occasionally even the fire, perhaps not the vehemence of Fox, with richer imagery, and far more correctness; the accurate composition of Pitt, with infinitely more grace and variety; the copiousness, almost the learning, and occasionally the depth of Burke, without his wearily elaborate air; for his speech never degenerates for an instant into dissipation, which Burke's scarcely ever avoids.

To characterise his manner of speaking from his writings would be difficult and tedious, if possible. There are in these, however, passages which plainly bear the impress of his extraordinary oratorical powers, and which, if spoken, must have produced an indescribable effect. Take a noble passage from the '*Dissertation on Parties*.'

"If King Charles had found the nation plunged in corruption; the people choosing their representatives for money, without any other regard; and these representatives of the people, as well as the nobility, reduced by luxury to beg the unhallowed alms of a court, or to receive, like miserable hirelings, the wages of iniquity from a minister; if he had found the nation, I say, in this condition (which extravagant supposition one cannot make without horror), he might have dishonoured her abroad, and impoverished and oppressed her at home, though he had been the weakest prince on earth, and his ministers the most odious and contemptible men that ever presumed to be ambitious. Our fathers might have fallen into circumstances which compose the quintessence of political misery. They might have sold their birthright for porridge, which was their own. They might have been bubbled by the foolish, bullied by the fearful, and insulted by those whom they despised. They would have deserved to be slaves, and they might have been treated as such. When a free people crouch, like camels, to be loaded, the next at hand, no matter who, mounts them, and they soon feel the whip and the spur of their tyrant, whether prince or minister, who resembles the devil in many respects; particularly in this—he is often both the tempter and the tormentor. He makes the criminal, and he punishes the crime."

Another fine passage, admirably fitted for spoken eloquence by its

rapidity, its point, its fulness of matter, each *hit* rising above the last, may be taken from the celebrated Dedication to Sir Robert Walpole :—

“Should a minister govern, in various instances of domestic and foreign management, ignorantly, weakly, or even wickedly, and yet pay this reverence and bear this regard to the constitution, he would deserve certainly much better quarter, and would meet with it too from every man of sense and honour, than a minister who should conduct the administration with great ability and success, and should at the same time procure and abet, or even connive at, such indirect violations of the rules of the constitution as tend to the destruction of it, or even at such evasions as tend to render it useless. A minister who had the ill qualities of both these, and the good ones of neither; who made his administration hateful in some respects, and despicable in others; who sought that security by ruining the constitution, which he had forfeited by dishonouring the government; who encouraged the profligate and seduced the unwary to concur with him in this design, by affecting to explode all public spirit, and to ridicule every form of our constitution : such a minister would be looked upon most justly as the shame and scourge of his country; sooner or later he would fall without pity, and it is hard to say what punishment would be proportionable to his crimes.”

Lastly, take this instance of another kind, but alike fitted for the senate :—

“The flowers they gather at Billingsgate to adorn and entwine their productions shall be passed over by me without any explication. They assume the privilege of watermen and oysterwomen : let them enjoy it in that good company, and exclusively of all other persons. They cause no scandal; they give no offence; they raise no sentiment but contempt in the breasts of those they attack : and it is to be hoped, for the honour of those whom they would be thought to defend, that they raise, by their low and dirty practice, no other sentiment in them. But there is another part of their proceedings which may be attributed by malicious people to you, and which deserves, for that reason alone, some place in this Dedication, as it might be some motive to the writing of it. When such authors grow scurrilous, it would be highly unjust to impute their scurrility to any prompter, because they have in themselves all that is necessary to constitute a scold—ill-manners, impudence, a foul mouth, and a fouler heart. But when they menace, they rise a note higher. They cannot do this in their own names. Men may be apt to conclude, therefore, that they do it in the name, as they affect to do it on the behalf, of the person in whose cause they desire to be thought retained.”

The gracefulness of Bolingbroke's manner has been so greatly extolled by his contemporaries, that we can hardly believe his

eloquence to have risen into the vehemence ascribed to it by one who had studied his works more than other men, for he had written an excellent imitation of his style. Mr. Burke speaks of that rapid torrent of "an impetuous and overbearing eloquence for which he is justly admired," as well as "the rich variety of his imagery."¹ There is assuredly nothing in his style to discountenance this notion; and, as Burke lived much nearer Bolingbroke's times than we do, there can be little doubt that his panegyric is correct. But all accounts agree in describing the external qualities (so to speak) of his oratory as perfect. A symmetrically beautiful and animated countenance, a noble and dignified person, a sonorous and flexible voice, action graceful and correct, though unstudied, gave his delivery an inexpressible charm with those who witnessed his extraordinary displays as spectators or critics; and armed his eloquence with resistless effect over those whom it was intended to sway, or persuade, or control. If the concurring accounts of witnesses, and the testimony to his merits borne by his writings, may be trusted, he must be pronounced to stand, upon the whole, at the head of modern orators. There may have been more measure and matured power in Pitt, more fire in the occasional bursts of Chatham, more unbridled vehemence, more intent reasoning in Fox, more deep-toned declamation in passages of Sheridan, more learned imagery in Burke, more wit and humour in Canning;² but, as a whole, and taking in all rhetorical gifts, and all the orator's accomplishments, no one, perhaps hardly the union of several of them, can match what we are taught by tradition to admire in Bolingbroke's spoken eloquence, and what the study of his works makes us easily believe to be true.

In considering Bolingbroke's character, there is even less possibility than in ordinary cases of separating the politic from the natural capacity; less pretence for making the distinction, so often and so incorrectly made, between that which is becoming or honest in political life, and that which is virtuous or pure in private. It is seldom, indeed, that the lax morality can be tolerated, or even understood, which relieves the general reputation of a man from the censure naturally descending upon it, by citing personal merit as a kind of set-off to political delinquency; seldom that there is any kind of sense in believing a man honest who has only betrayed

¹ Preface to the *Vindication of Natural Society* (*Sub fine*).

² It is inconsistent with the plan of this work to treat of living speakers; and this imposes a restraint on us in illustrating by comparison. For who can fail to recollect that the utmost reach of eloquence has been attained by those who survive? Who can doubt that Lord Plunket will, in after times, be classed with the very greatest orators; and that his style, of the highest excellence, is also eminently original, entirely his own? It affords the most perfect study to those whom its perfection may not make despair. In confining the mention of Mr. Canning to wit and humour, it must only be understood that we speak of the thing defective in Bolingbroke, not as confining Mr. C.'s excellence to that department; he was a very considerable orator in other respects.

his colleague, because he never cheated his friend; or in acquitting of knavery the statesman who has sacrificed his principles for preferment, merely because he has never taken a bribe to break some private trust, embezzled a ward's money, sold a daughter or a wife. Nothing can be more shadowy than such distinctions, nothing more arbitrary than such lines of demarcation. To say that a dishonest, or sordid, or treacherous politician may be a virtuous man, because he has never exposed himself to prosecution for fraud, or forgery, or theft, is near akin to the fantastical morality which should acquit a common offender of horse-stealing because he had never been charged with burglary. It must, however, be confessed, that as there are some cases of political offences much worse than others, so in these the impossibility of making such distinctions becomes more apparent; and both the kind and the amount of the crimes charged upon Bolingbroke, seem to point him out as an instance in which all contrast between public and private character signally fails. If, then, we advert to his conduct under these two heads, it is only in order to treat of different kinds of delinquency in separation and in succession.

He came into Parliament as a declared Tory; the ancient families from which he sprung, the St. Johns and the Ports, had ever been of that faith. In the ministry which the Queen formed during the latter years of her reign from the members of that party, he held a conspicuous place; having been Secretary of State and a leading supporter, first in the Commons, then in the Lords. He began under Harley, and to Harley he devoted himself; to Harley he seemed firmly attached. Soon there broke out symptoms of jealousy: these occurred on the promotion of his chief to an earldom, while he only was made a viscount himself; the want of a blue riband completed the philosopher's chagrin; the incapacity, real or fancied, of his former patron, called down the moralist's vengeance instead of exciting his compassion or claiming his help; and the latter part of his official life was passed in continually renewed and continually failing attempts to supplant and to ruin him. But we know the interior of the cabinet too little, are too superficially acquainted with personal details, to be prepared for pronouncing a safe judgment upon the degree of blame which he thus earned: possibly he only shared it with the other party; not impossibly the whole might be Harley's. Upon the schemes in which he was engaged for restoring the Stuarts, undoing the work of the Revolution, exposing the civil and religious liberties of the country to the most imminent peril, and effecting this change through the horrors of civil war, possibly aggravated by foreign invasion, there can exist no doubt whatever. We shall first advert to the result of the evidence upon this head: and then consider his case, as made by himself, to see how far he can be said to stand acquitted even upon his own showing.

That some at least of the Queen's Tory ministers, possibly the Queen herself, were desirous of restoring the exiled family, and setting aside the Act of Settlement, extorted from the same party by King William, there can be no doubt. Bolingbroke always professed himself the fast friend of the Revolution, and cited his having helped to introduce the Act of Settlement in proof of it. But the coldness and the sluggishness of that proceeding, on the part of himself and the King's Tory ministers, is well known; nor does any one now doubt that they endeavoured to obstruct the bill in its progress, until the decease of the King should interrupt or supersede the measure. But Bolingbroke's denial of any design favourable to the Pretender, until after his attainder and during his exile, was constant and peremptory. Nor did any probabilities the other way suffice to convince men how false his assertions were, until the publication of Marshal Berwick's "Memoirs" at once disclosed the truth; and then we had a clear statement of his treason having commenced during the Queen's life-time—a statement under the hand of the very person through whom he has himself said that his communications to and from the Pretender uniformly passed, at the period when he confesses himself to have been engaged in the Stuart councils. There is an end, therefore, of his defence against the main body of the accusation, and it is ended by a witness to whose testimony he has precluded himself from objecting. But this is not all. His own conduct bears testimony against him as loudly as his own witness. Upon the Queen's demise, Harley, Ormond, and himself, being vehemently suspected of treasonable practices, were accused in Parliament constitutionally, legally, regularly, formally. What was the course pursued by the three? Harley, conscious of innocence, like a guiltless man remained, awaited his impeachment, faced his accusers, met his trial, was unanimously acquitted. Nor does any one now believe, nor did any but they whom faction blinded then believe, that he had any share at all in the intrigue set on foot to restore the Stuarts. Ormond and Bolingbroke fled; they would not stand their trial. Now, the former never denied his accession to the treasonable plot—never having indeed professed any favourable disposition towards the Revolution Settlement; the latter, though he pretended to deny his guilt, yet gave none but the most frivolous reasons to explain his flight. He could only say that so odious to him had his former friend, his original patron, become, that he could not think of submitting to be coupled or mixed up with him in any matter or in any manner. So that his hatred of another prevailed over his love of himself—his inveterate dislike of his neighbour over the natural desire of self-defence; his repugnance for an enemy made him reject life itself when the terms on which it was offered involved the act of taking the same precaution with his rival to secure his safety; and, rather than defend his honour, clear his character

from the worst of accusations, in the way common to all men, and which one whom he disliked had, like all innocent men, pursued, he preferred wholly abandoning the defence of his reputation, and passing with all for a false traitor. It is not often that a guilty person can make an honest-looking defence; not seldom that the excuses offered by suspected culprits work their conviction. But never yet did any one, when charged with a crime, draw the noose around his own neck more fatally than Bolingbroke did, when he resorted to so wretched an explanation of the act, which, unexplained, was a confession—the flight from his accusers. If that act, standing alone, was fatal to the supposition of his innocence, the defence of it was, if possible, more decisive to his condemnation.

But his subsequent proceedings, and his own general defence of his whole conduct, are still more destructive of his fame. As soon as he fled, his attainer passed, and passed, be it observed, without a dissenting voice through both Houses—a circumstance demonstrative of the universal impression entertained of his guilt; and a thing which never could have happened to a man so lately minister, among his own supporters and his own party, upon any the lowest estimate of public virtue or political friendship, had any doubt existed regarding his conduct, or had he ventured even to deny the charges in private communications with his adherents. He arrived in France : without a day's delay he put himself in communication with the Pretender and his agents; and he at once accepted under him the office of his Secretary of State. Here then let us pause, and ask if this step was consistent with the charge against him being groundless. A statesman, professing inviolable attachment to the Revolution Settlement, is accused of treasonable correspondence with the exiled family; he flies, and because he has been, as he alleges, falsely accused of that offence, he immediately proceeds to commit it. Suppose he made the only feasible excuse for running away from his accusers—that the public prejudices against him were so strong as to deprive him of all chance of a fair trial—did he not know that all such prepossessions are in their nature, in the nature of the people, in the nature of truth and justice, temporary, and pass away? Then would not innocence, if acting under the guidance of common sense and an ordinary knowledge of mankind, have waited, more or less patient, more or less tranquil, for the season of returning calm, when justice might be surely expected? But could anything be more inconsistent with all supposition of innocence than instantly to commit the offence in question, because there was a delay of justice, through the prevalence of popular prejudice? What would he said of any man's honesty who had fled from a charge of theft which he denied, and feared to meet because supported by perjured witnesses, if he instantly took to the highway for his support? If, indeed, he says that the attainer gave him a right to take part against the government,

then it must be observed that some months were allowed him by the act to return and take his trial, and that he never even waited to see whether, before the given time expired, men's minds should become so calm as to let him safely encounter the charge.

But another and a higher ground must be taken. Who can maintain that it is the part of an honest man, to say nothing of a patriotic statesman, to leave the party of his country, and go over to her enemies, the instant he has been maltreated, however grievously, however inexcusably by her—that is, by a part of his enemies who happen to guide her councils? Is it the part of public virtue—but is it the part of common honesty—to side with the enemy, and war with our own country because she or her rulers have oppressed us? Then, if all men are agreed that this affords no justification for such treason, how much worse is his crime who would plunge his country into civil war, to wreak his vengeance on the faction that has oppressed and banished him? The Revolution Settlement had obtained Bolingbroke's deliberate approbation: no man has spoken more strongly in its favour; it was the guarantee, according to him, of both civil and religious liberty. Yet against this settlement he declares war: to subvert it he exerts all his powers, merely because the Whig party had maltreated himself, and created against him a prejudice he was afraid to face. Nay more—be the settlement the very best conceivable scheme of government or not, it was established, and could only be upset by civil commotion, and probably required the aid of foreign invasion to overthrow it. To darken the face of his native land, with those worst of all plagues was his desire, that he might take his revenge on his enemies, and trample upon them, raised to power under the restored dynasty of the bigoted and tyrannical Stuarts! This is not the charge made against Bolingbroke by his adversaries; it is not the sentence pronounced upon him by an impartial public; it is the case made for himself by himself, and it is as complete a confession of enormous guilt as ever man made. It further betokens a mind callous to all right feelings; an understanding perverted by the sophistries of selfish ingenuity; a heart in which the honest, with the amiable sentiments of our nature, have been extinguished by the habitual contemplations familiar to a low ambition.

From a man who could thus act in sharing the Pretender's fortunes, and could thus defend his conduct, little honesty could be expected to the party with which he had now ranged himself. The charge of having neglected the interests of the Pretender, and done less than he ought to further the rebellion in 1715, made against him by the thoughtless zeal, the gross ignorance, the foolish presumption of the Jacobites, and to which is almost entirely confined the defence of himself, in his celebrated, and for composition justly celebrated, 'Letter to Sir William Windham,' was plainly groundless. It was likely, indeed, to be groundless; for

the interests of Bolingbroke, all the speculations of his ambition, all the revengeful passions of his nature, were enlisted to make him zealous in good earnest for the success of the rebellion; and to aid that enterprise, however much he might despair of it, he exerted his utmost resources of intrigue, of solicitation, of argument. But as soon as it had failed, the Pretender probably yielded to the misrepresentations of Bolingbroke's enemies, possibly lent an ear to the vulgar herd of detractors, who could not believe a man was in earnest to serve the Prince because he refused, like them, to shut his eyes against the truth, and believe their affairs flourishing when they were all but desperate. The intrigues of Lord Mar worked upon a mind so prepared; and advantage being taken of a coarse though strong expression of disrespect towards the Prince, he was induced to dismiss by far his ablest supporter, and take that wily old Scotchman as his minister.

There was the usual amount of royal perfidy in the manner of his dismissal, and not much more. At night he squeezed his hand, and expressed his regard for the man whom in the morning he dismissed by a civil message requiring the seals of his office, and renewing his protestations of gratitude for his services, and confidence in his attachment. Bolingbroke appears to have felt this deeply. He instantly left the party, and for ever; but he affects to say that he had previously taken the determination of retiring from all connexion with the service as soon as the attempt of 1715 should be made and should fail. Assuming this to be true, which it probably is not, he admits that his course was to depend, not on any merits of the Stuart cause, not on any view of British interests, not on any vain, childish, romantic notions of public duty and its dictates, but simply upon his own personal convenience, which was alone to be consulted, and which was to exact his retirement unless the dynasty were restored—which was, of course, to sanction his continuance in the service in the event of success crowning the Prince, and enabling Bolingbroke to be minister of England. But whatever might have been his intentions in the event of the Pretender retaining him as his Secretary of State, his dismissal produced an instantaneous effect. All regard for the cause which he had made his own was lost in the revenge for his deprivation of place under its chief; and he lost not a moment in reconciling himself with the party whom he had betrayed, and deserted, and opposed. To obtain an amnesty for the present, and the possibility of promotion hereafter, no professions of contrition were too humble, no promises of amendment too solemn, no display of zeal for the Government which he had done his utmost to destroy too extravagant. To a certain extent he was believed, because the Pretender's cause was now considered desperate, and Bolingbroke's interest coincided with the duty of performing his promise. To a certain extent, therefore, his suit was successful, and he was suffered to

return home to resume his property and his rank; but the doors of Parliament and office were kept closed against him, and the rest of his life was spent in unavailing regrets that he had ever left his country, and as unavailing rancour against the great and honest minister who had shown him mercy without being his dupe—who had allowed him to make England a dwelling-place once more, without letting him make it once more the sport of his unprincipled ambition.

Here, again, regarding his final abandonment of the Pretender, we have his own account, and on that alone we are condemning him. Because the Parliament of the Brunswicks attainted him when he confessed his guilt by his flight, he joined the standard of the Stuarts. It was covered with irremediable defeat, and he resolved to quit it. But meanwhile the master into whose service he came as a volunteer chose to take another minister: therefore Bolingbroke deserted him, and deserted him when his misfortunes were much more unquestionable than his ingratitude. The pivot of all his actions, by all that he urges in his own behalf, was his individual, private, personal interest. To this consideration all sense of principle was sacrificed, all obligation of duty subjected; whatever his revenge prompted, whatever his ambition recommended, that he deemed himself justified in doing, if not called upon to do.

Bolingbroke's 'Idea of a Patriot King' certainly differed exceedingly from his idea of a Patriot Subject. The duty of the former, according to him, required a constant sacrifice of his own interests to the good of his country; the duty of the latter he considered to be a constant sacrifice of his country to himself. The one was bound on no account ever to regard either his feelings or his tastes, the interests of his family, or the powers of his station; the other was justified in regarding his own gratification, whether of caprice, or revenge, or ambition, as the only object of his life. Between the ruler and his subjects there was in this view no kind of reciprocity; for all the life of self-sacrifice spent by the one was to be repaid by a life of undisturbed and undisguised self-seeking in the other. But if the guarantee which his system proposed to afford for the performance of the patriot king's duties, or for making patriots of kings, was somewhat scanty and precarious, not to say fantastical, ample security was held out for the patriot citizen's part being well filled. The monarch was enticed to a right and moderate use of power by clothing him with prerogative, and trusting rather to that not being abused than to influence not being very extravagantly employed; the secret for moderating the love of dominion was to bestow it without any restraint; the protection given to the people against the prerogative of the prince was to deliver them over into his hands; the method proposed for putting the wolf out of conceit with blood was to throw the lamb to him bound. If this did not seem a very hopeful mode of attaining the object, a

very likely way to realise the 'Idea of a Patriot King,' the plan for producing patriot citizens in unlimited supply was abundantly certain. Whatever defects the one scheme might disclose in the knowledge of human nature, whatever ignorance of human frailty, none whatever could be charged upon the other; for it appealed to the whole selfish feelings of the soul, made each man the judge of what was most virtuous for him to do, and, to guide his judgment, furnished him with a pleasing canon enough—he had only to follow his own inclinations whithersoever they might lead. Such was the system of Bolingbroke upon the relative duties of sovereigns and subjects—a system somewhat more symmetrically unfolded as regards the former; but, touching the latter, fully exemplified by his practice, and also plainly sketched by his writings composed in his own defence; for it must never be forgotten that he is not like most men who have gone astray by refusing to practise what they preach, or proving unequal to square their own conduct by the rules which in general they confess to be just. His conduct has been openly and deliberately vindicated by himself upon the ground that all he did, at least all he admitted himself to have done, he was justified in doing; and he has confessed himself to have acted in every particular with an undeviating regard to the pursuit of his own interests, and the gratification of his own passions.

Of Bolingbroke's private life and personal qualities, as apart from his public and political, little needs be added. He who bore the part in affairs which we have been contemplating could not easily have been a man of strict integrity, or of high principle in any relation of life. There may have been nothing mean or sordid in his nature; an honesty, seldom tried in persons of his station, may have been proof against the common temptations to which it was exposed; the honour which worldly men make their god may have found in him a submissive worshipper; but the more exalted and the nobler qualities of the soul were not likely to be displayed by one whose selfish propensities were gratified in public life at the cost of all that statesmen most regard in public character; and little reliance can be placed either on the humanity, or the self-control, or the self-respect of one whose passions are his masters, and hurry him on to gratification at all the hazards that virtue can encounter. Accordingly, his youth was a course of unrestrained and habitual indulgence. In a libertine age he was marked as among the most licentious. Even his professed panegyrist, Dean Swift, makes no defence for this part of his life, and only ventures to suggest that he had lived long enough to regret and repent of it. Sir William Windham, too, fell into such courses, carried away by his example, and seduced by the charms of his society: and they who have written of him ascribe his early dissipation to the ascendant of such a Mentor. That he survived this tempest of the passions many years, and became more quiet in his demeanour during the calm-

ness of his blood, is perhaps more the result of physical causes than any great eulogy of his returning virtue, or any manifestation of his penitence.

That his feelings, however, when left to their natural course, unperturbed by evil associates, nor hurried by evil propensities, were kind and generous, there is sufficient proof. The marriage which in early youth he first contracted was one of accident and of family arrangement: like all such unions, it was attended with little happiness. The second wife was one of his choice: to her his demeanour was blameless, and he enjoyed much comfort in her society. His attachment to his friends was warm and zealous; and they cultivated and looked up to him with a fervour which can ill be expressed by such ordinary words as esteem, or respect, or even admiration. Yet even in this relation, the most attractive in which he appears to us, his proud temper got the better of his kinder nature; and he persecuted the memory of Pope, whom living he had loved so well, with a rancour hardly to be palliated, certainly not to be vindicated, by the paltry trick to which that great poet and little man had lent himself, in an underhand publication of the manuscripts confided to his care.

His spirit was high and manly; his courage, personal and political, was without a stain. He had no sordid propensities; his faults were not mean or paltry; they were, both in his private life and his public, on a large scale, creating, for the most part, wonder or terror more than scorn or contempt—though his conduct towards the Pretender approached near an exception to this remark; and the restless impatience with which he bore his long exclusion from the great stage of public affairs, and the relentless vengeance with which he, in consequence of this exclusion, pursued Walpole as its cause, betokened anything rather than greatness of soul.

That the genius which he displayed in the senate, his wisdom, his address, his resources in council, should, when joined to fascinating manners and literary accomplishments, have made him shine in society without a rival, can easily be comprehended. So great an orator, so noble a person in figure and in demeanour, one so little under the dominion of the principle which makes men harsh, and the restraints which tend to render their manners formal—was sure to captivate all superficial observers, and even to win the more precious applause of superior minds. To do that which he did so well naturally pleased him; to give delight was itself delightful; and he indulged in the more harmless relaxations of society long after he had ceased to be a partaker in the less reputable pleasures of polished life. He probably left as high a reputation behind him, among the contemporaries of his maturer years, for his social qualities, which remained by him to the last, as he had gained with those who remembered the eloquence that in his earlier days shook the senate, or the policy and intrigues that had also shaken the

monarchy itself. The dreadful malady under which he long lingered, and at length sunk—a cancer in the face—he bore with exemplary fortitude, a fortitude drawn from the natural resources of his vigorous mind, and unhappily not aided by the consolations of any religion; for, having early cast off the belief in revelation, he had substituted in its stead a dark and gloomy naturalism, which even rejected those glimmerings of hope as to futurity not untasted by the wiser of the heathens.

Such was Bolingbroke, and as such he must be regarded by impartial posterity, after the virulence of party has long subsided, and the view is no more intercepted either by the rancour of political enmity, or by the partiality of adherents, or by the fondness of friendship. Such, too, is Bolingbroke when the gloss of trivial accomplishments is worn off by time, and the lustre of genius itself has faded beside the simple and transcendent light of virtue. The contemplation is not without its uses. The glare of talents and success is apt to obscure defects which are incomparably more mischievous than any intellectual powers can be either useful or admirable. Nor can a lasting renown—a renown that alone deserves the aspirations of a rational being—ever be built upon any foundations save those which are laid in an honest heart and a firm purpose, both conspiring to work out the good of mankind. That renown will be as imperishable as it is pure. .

PRINCIPLES
OF
DEMOCRATIC AND OF MIXED
GOVERNMENT.

TO
CHARLES EARL GREY, K. G.,

ETC., ETC., ETC.

THIS VOLUME, expounding the principles of Constitutional Polity that guided his brilliant and useful Administration, is Inscribed by the Author, in token of the friendship which has lasted during his whole public life, and of the veneration which, in common with men of all classes and all nations, he cherishes for a Statesman whose virtues have rarely been equalled, never surpassed.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE NATURE OF DEMOCRACY IN GENERAL.

Connexion of the Subject—Definition of Democracy—Definition illustrated—Examples : America ; England ; Necker's Republic ; Athens—Purest Democracy—Ancient Democracies filled places by lot—Error upon Disqualifications—Term Democracy preferable to Republic.

We have examined, in the two first parts of our *Political Philosophy*, three great divisions of government : Absolute, or Eastern Monarchy—Constitutional, or European Monarchy—and Aristocracy. The tendency of the first is, as society advances, to become in some degree constitutional, though this has not often happened to any considerable extent. The tendency of the second is, with the advance of society, to become aristocratic, as happened to it in Sweden and Denmark, or to become aristocratic without any considerable social improvement, as in the Feudal Monarchies. It has also a tendency towards mixed or limited Monarchy. The abuse of the Monarchical form of government is Absolute Monarchy or Despotism. The tendency of Aristocratic Commonwealths is towards Monarchy, either constitutional or mixed ; and their abuse is Oligarchy. Upon the ruins of either a Constitutional Monarchy or an Aristocracy, but more rarely of the latter, a Republican or Democratic constitution has frequently been built ; and, again, an Aristocracy has frequently grown out of popular republics, both in ancient and modern times.—We now proceed to the examination of the two kinds of policy which remain to be considered, Democracy and Mixed Government—and first of Democracy.

This, as its name implies, is the government of the people, and of the people at large. The name is, therefore, preferable to republic, because a republic may be aristocratic, as the Roman, most of the Italian, and some of the Swiss republics. It may even be Monarchical, as the Spartan and the Polish. But *Democracy* denotes the constitution which allows the superior power to reside in the whole body of the citizens, having never parted with it to a Prince, or vested it in the hands of a select body of the community, from which the rest are excluded.

In order to constitute a Democracy, therefore, it is necessary that the people should be either formally or substantially possessed of the supreme power, not sharing it with any other party independent of themselves, still less exercising authority subject to the control

or revision of any other and independent body. I have said formally or substantially. If, as in the smaller republics of the old world, and in some of the smaller Italian and Swiss States of modern times, the whole people, without any preference of one class, or any distinction of ranks, make the laws by which the State is to be governed, and choose the magistrates by whom they are to be executed, then there is a Democracy in form as well as in substance; but if the whole people exercise the legislative power through deputies or representatives chosen by all, and either directly or by such delegates appoint the Magistrates, then there is equally a Democracy, the supreme legislative and executive authority being vested in the people. The making laws by delegation to representatives is no more an abdication of the legislative power in this instance, than the executing those laws by delegation to the magistrates is an abdication of the executive power in the case first put of a pure and formal Democracy.

Nor will the government cease to be Democratic, if a certain class of the people are excluded from direct power, provided that disqualified class is not prevented from becoming members of the qualified body. The United States of America have undeniably all of them a Democratic constitution, although there is in most of them an electoral qualification. If in England the Monarchy and the House of Lords were, unhappily, abolished, and the whole power of the state, executive as well as legislative, were vested in the House of Commons, it would be an abuse of terms to call the constitution aristocratic, although the elective franchise, and therefore the direct exercise of political power, would be confined to less than a million of persons—about the sixth part of the community, that is, of males above twenty-one years of age, because the other five-sixths would not be excluded from admission into the qualified class. The very essence of an aristocracy is, that a class should exist endowed with the supreme power, while into that class admission is denied to the people at large. When M. Necker, in 1802, in discussing the question whether a Monarchy or a Democracy be the best form of government for France, concluded in favour of “a republic, one and indivisible;” he proposed a constitution which vested the elective franchise, both as to the legislative and the executive functions, substantially in a body chosen by persons of considerable property; for the qualification was the payment of 8*l.* a-year of direct taxes. Yet he deemed this a purely Republican Constitution.¹ No doubt there may be degrees of Democracy as of aristocracy; and a government may be termed most purely Democratic which is in the hands of all the males whose age gives them the right to be trusted by their fellow-

¹ “*Dernières Vues de Politique et de Finance.*” Mr. Hume, in his “*Idea of a perfect Commonwealth,*” intended to design rather a mixed republic, partly aristocratic, though leaning towards democracy. The substantial power was vested in persons of 20*l.* a-year in the country, and 500*l.* capital in the towns.—*Essays*, vol. i., p. 487.

citizens, just as the government may be termed most purely aristocratic that is vested in an hereditary body, all entrance into which is denied to every one else on any account whatever. Some of the Italian Republics gave the select or Patrician body a power of adding to their numbers. The Patrician body at Rome of old was constantly augmented by the admission of Plebeians officially. Yet it would be a great abuse of language to term these governments on that account Democratic. It would be equally erroneous to give the British Constitution on the supposition now made the name of aristocratic as it would be to call the States of Carolina and Virginia, or of Attica, aristocracies because the slave population were excluded from all rights, and the political power, as well as all other authority, was vested in the free citizens.

We have seen that a Monarchical Government does not cease to be absolute merely because the Sovereign exercises his authority through certain functionaries, or certain Councils, appointed by himself. In like manner a government does not cease to be Democratic merely because certain arrangements are made by which the bulk or body of the people exercise the supreme power, although these arrangements should exclude a certain number of the poorer and more ignorant citizens. Such arrangements may be adopted for the purpose of giving effect to the genuine popular will and voice; they may be used in order to prevent misgovernment and anarchy. Thus, if the community consist of a small body of well-informed persons, and a large body wholly illiterate, to give an equal voice in all affairs to the latter would be subjecting the councils of the state to the ignorance, imbecility, and incapacity of the community. Nor could we term it less a Democracy because its laws required every person to have a certain degree of knowledge, before he was entitled to exercise political power. It would not be an Aristocracy, because any one could become qualified, if he chose, for admission into the governing class.

It must, however, be granted that there is one difference between the case put and that of the Absolute Monarchy, administered by the Sovereign with Councils. These Councils are the creatures of his power and pleasure; a breath from him can unmake as it made them. They exercise no direct control whatever over him, and only share his prerogative to the extent to which it pleases him that they should. Whereas the exclusion of a great body of the people, whatever be the ground of it, and however beneficial to the State, either on account of poverty or of ignorance and incapacity, leaves a superiority in one class over the rest, and prevents the excluded classes, a considerable portion of the people, probably their majority, from enjoying political rights, while their circumstances remain unchanged. Hence it must be admitted that the Democracy is more pure which allows of no such distinctions, as in ancient

times at Athens, where every citizen had the power, equally with every other, of deciding upon the legislation and the policy of the Republic. The constitution was much the worse on this account, but it was also the more purely and entirely Democratic.

Indeed the more pure of the ancient Democracies, such as the Athenian, carried the equality of political rights, and the distribution of the supreme power in the state, a step further. They made a violent endeavour to counteract the natural aristocracy, not adopting the Spartan plan to prevent all accumulation of wealth, and thus cause its equal distribution, to preserve which is manifestly impracticable, but making arrangements which either gave the selection of persons who should fill certain situations to chance, or establishing some kind of rotation in the succession to those situations. Thus the Senators at Athens were chosen by lot; and the presiding body, the Prytanes, took their place by rotation. The Heliaæ, or occasional grand council, was also composed by lot; and ten of the fifty Ephetæ, or judges in cases of homicide, were so chosen. In the spirit of excessive distrust and jealousy which prevails with all Democratic governments, an additional security for the division of power was taken by the short period for which office was conferred. Except the Areopagus no places were for life; all were annual. Nor was the choice of magistrates by lot peculiar to Athens. It seems to have been deemed essential to pure and genuine Democratic government. When Herodotus describes the reasons given for the different forms of government by the Persians, on overturning the sovereignty of the Magi, he makes Otanes, who supported a Democracy, give as one of the characteristics, that all offices were conferred by lot.¹

Now it would manifestly be most erroneous to consider the choice by lot of all or the greater part of the councils in a republic, an essential requisite of Democracy; or to consider a mixture of lot and rotation as such a characteristic. Such institutions, such contrivances of jealous distrust, might render the ancient Democracies more rigorously pure; but they never can be considered as indispensable to a Democratic form of government. A constitution may be in the ordinary sense of the term Democratic which falls very far short of such extremes; and so in like manner it never can be called mixed, much less aristocratic, with any propriety of speech, merely because a portion of the people is in point of fact excluded from direct power, provided there be no insuperable obstacle in the way of that portion becoming part of the ruling or privileged body.²

¹ Παλὸν μὲν ἀρχαὶ ἀρχαί. (Thalia. 80.)

² A very respectable class of men in this country are exceedingly apt to fall into the error of confounding disqualifications and exclusions in fact, with disqualifications and exclusions in law. If a system were established which gave to all persons equally the right of voting for any important office-bearers, as parish officers or schoolmasters, the Dissenters object, because they would, in country parishes especially, be outvoted by the Churchmen. This is only because they

To avoid all confusion, therefore, it seems expedient to use the term *democracy* rather than *republic* for the government which is in the hands of the people. Republic does not really express this idea correctly; it means commonwealth. Many writers have used it to designate a popular government, a government in which the supreme power is exercised by any portion of the people, as contradistinguished from monarchy. Thus, they divide republics into two classes—Aristocratic and Democratic, according as a portion or the whole of the people govern. But the name of a republic has also been applied to a monarchy, as in the case of Poland; nor, indeed, could the principalities into which the Italian republics declined, and the mixed government of the United Provinces, though termed republics, be considered in any other light than as a species of monarchy. The term Democracy is free from all ambiguity, and stands plainly distinguished both from monarchy and aristocracy.

CHAPTER II.

ORIGIN OF DEMOCRACIES.

Origin of ancient Democracies obscure—Roman, Theban, Athenian, Carthaginian—Modern Commonwealths—Italian, Swiss, Dutch, French, American—Popular Government natural to Towns—Four Causes of this.

The origin of Democratic governments in ancient times is involved unavoidably in great obscurity, and there is so much of fancy, so much indeed even of mere fable in the common accounts which national traditions have furnished of these as well as of ancient monarchies, that we are more likely to be misled than instructed by consulting them. Their details are absolutely to be rejected; if we can safely lend them any credit, it must be confined to their most general outlines. Thus we may easily assume that the earliest government of Rome, as indeed of all communities, was a rude monarchy. We may also be safe in supposing that the kings had a council of the principal inhabitants, which was called a senate; and there is no reason to doubt that the tyrannical conduct of the sovereigns occasioned a change of government, and the establishment of an Aristocratic, then of a Democratic, which soon became a mixed aristocratic, republic. But it would not be safe to trust the traditions which have been handed down of the particular incidents that attended the early revolution. We know still less of the change which at Athens substituted a Democracy for the original monarchy,

form a minority. What they really seek is, that the minority should govern the majority, or at least that each class should choose one, which assumes that the office is to be held by two, and also that religious distinctions are to be perpetuated.

or of the stages by which the archons succeeded to the kings, further than that upon the death of Codrus the power of the sovereign was much abridged, and the name of archon, or first magistrate, given to the king. But the particulars of the subsequent changes which made the office cease to be hereditary and become elective, lasting first for ten years, afterwards for a year only, are involved in complete uncertainty. Nor have we any accurate account of the degree in which the government was Democratic before Solon's reforms, or the extent to which these reforms altered it. The probability is that the pure Democracy was only formed by degrees. The origin of the Theban or Boeotian Democracy is still more obscure; but it is not always that the ancient historians make so honest a confession of their ignorance as Pausanias does when giving an account of their kings. After enumerating sixteen who followed Cadmus, he says, that being unable to find any better account of them, he has taken his narrative from fable.¹ How the government became popular and aristocratic and oligarchical, we have not the least information. It never was Democratic except for a few years, when under the influence of Athens, and it generally took the part of Sparta against that Democratic republic. Of Carthage we know hardly anything for certain; and are still so little able to discover how the kings or princes that originally governed the colony, ceasing to rule, were succeeded by elective magistrates, called *suffetes*, that we are altogether in the dark as to the nature of the government even in the time of Hannibal and down to the Roman conquest; for though Aristotle's remarks upon it² (the only information we have) censure the constitution as being too Democratic, he also states enough to show that the supreme power was vested in select bodies, who only occasionally appealed to the people. But in what way this proceeding took place, how the senate were chosen, how long the office of the *suffetes* lasted, the nature of the senate, in what way the committee of one hundred were appointed, and how the pentarchy, or sub-committee of five, were named, which held their places for life till Hannibal made the office annual—all these things we are wholly ignorant of, and yet upon these the structure of the government entirely depends.³

Our information respecting the origin of Modern Republics is, as might naturally be expected, much more full. We can with sufficient accuracy trace the changes which have substituted popular for monarchical government, both in Italy and in Switzerland; the

¹ Οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθὲς παρασκευαῖν. ἐπομαί τῷ μῦθῳ. lib. ix. c. v.

² De Rep., lib. ii. c. xi.

³ The obscurity in which the prejudices and dishonesty of the Roman historians have left us on all that relates to Carthage, is infinitely discreditable to them, and fully warrants the suspicion that the Carthaginian superiority, in almost all respects, was the cause of this jealousy. An able and judicious discussion of this point is to be found in Mr. Wortley Montague's work "On the Ancient Republics," chap. vii.

extension of Democratic power in the cities, principally as commerce increased; the subsequent establishment, first of Aristocratic and afterwards of Monarchical Government, in the Italian states, with the exception of Venice, where the aristocracy was only subverted by foreign conquest; and the introduction of the aristocratic polity into several of the Swiss republics. The revolution which separated the Netherland states from the Spanish monarchy, and led to the foundation of the Dutch republic, belongs to a still more recent period of history, and thus we are accurately informed of the origin of that mixed Democracy. Those Republics, however, were never purely Democratic, nor even approached near to that model; none of them continued for any great length of time to preserve such portion as they had of the Democratic polity; and all of them were commonwealths of a limited extent. [It was reserved for our own times to see the experiment of a Democracy tried both upon an extensive scale and in all the purity of the popular principle. The two great countries of France and North America have exhibited this spectacle, so interesting to political inquirers. In the former the duration of the Democratic polity was confined to a few years; in the latter it has lasted above half a century, without affording any just ground of alarm as to its continued endurance; and the particulars of its origin, as well as all the details of its structure and functions, being so well ascertained, the constitution of the United States presents the most instructive of lessons to the political student.]

Although the origin of the ancient democracies may be unknown to us in detail, we may nevertheless rest assured that in almost every case the first form of government was Monarchical. In each state it probably began with the patriarchal authority of the head of the family, extended afterwards to the more skilful and experienced warrior of the tribe. Either the authority of the chief was feeble, from the weight of his competitors and the influence of his council, which ended in a mixed government, then in an aristocracy; or by exciting resistance to his tyranny he occasioned a change of government and the admission of the chief men to a share, sometimes to the whole, of the supreme government. In some cases by slow degrees, in others by more sudden revolutions, the bulk of the people displaced the select body, and made the constitution Democratical; and sometimes, though in all likelihood much more rarely, the transition was at once made, as at Rome, from the Monarchical to the Aristocratic and Democratic polity.

We may however be sure of one point, Democracy is much more natural to towns or cities than to country districts; and here it may be observed that in general popular governments, either on the Aristocratic or Democratic model, have at all periods of the world been more usually established in the towns than in the country.

So it was in old times, when the republic was a town with the neighbouring territory subjected to its citizens, either a select body or the people at large. So it was in modern Italy, as we have seen already. But so also to a certain degree it was in the Feudal Monarchies north of the Alps, the civic corporations having much more important franchises and privileges than the inhabitants of the country districts.

The causes of this difference are sufficiently obvious from the circumstances of the people in the towns. In the *first* place, the wealth which is accumulated in the hands of traders and mercantile men gives rise to independent sentiments and to a dislike of the arbitrary power which places that wealth in jeopardy, and to a sense of personal importance, which leads, by a very direct and very short road, to a desire of sharing the chief power in the state. *Secondly*, the constant intercourse of society in towns has, independent of the wealth and the occupations incident to them, a direct tendency to civilise the inhabitants, and to beget discussions of rights and of policy inconsistent with an entire exclusion from the management of the national concerns. *Thirdly*, the proximity of residence and the daily meeting together, gives to the townsfolk great facilities of combination and of resistance which the inhabitants scattered over the country cannot in any degree possess. As against a prince, each person living alone is wholly powerless, and combination is so difficult, that we see, even in an advanced stage of society, when the towns-people are everywhere combining for their real or supposed interests, sometimes in direct opposition to the interests, real or supposed, of the country people, the latter hardly ever unite, even in self-defence, and can with the utmost difficulty be prevailed upon to manifest their numerical force in support of measures for their separate interest. *Lastly*, and chiefly, there is a great facility given to holding popular assemblies, and thus allowing the people a just share in the government, when they live together, as in towns, while the collecting of country people is plainly impossible. The whole people of a town may be assembled together; if the town is not large, the whole inhabitants may conveniently and frequently hold really deliberative assemblies on public affairs—a thing altogether impossible for the people scattered in the country to attempt.

For these reasons it is that we may confidently affirm the superior adaptation of towns to popular government; and hence the Republican regimen, either Aristocratic or Democratic, has more frequently prevailed in them than in country districts.

CHAPTER III.

NATURAL LIMITS OF PURE DEMOCRACIES.

Limits to Popular Assemblies—Calculations of Numbers—Paradoxes of Authors—Montesquieu, his merits and defects—Two strange Positions of his—Millar, his speculative Errors—True relation of Government to Territory.

As long as the Democratic principle is kept pure, unmixed, and uncontrolled, that is as long as the supreme power is exercised by the whole body of the people, it cannot be applied practically to a large community. In order that the government may be carried on by the people, it may not be necessary that they should perform each act of the supreme or controlling administration, that is, issue the necessary orders to the tribunals, to the tax-gatherers, or to the commanders. This control or general superintendence may be devolved upon a council more or less numerous; it may even be entrusted to a single functionary, or two, as at Rome; and provided they hold their office only for a short period, the democracy is still pure, just as it is pure though justice is administered, taxes collected, and troops commanded, by persons entrusted with these high functions. But the power of making laws and of choosing the administrative council, or functionaries, resides in the people, and can only be exercised by themselves. It is not necessary that they should appoint the judge, the tax-gatherer, or the captain; but they must choose the council or the functionary by whom these appointments are to be made. Then, whether they are to assemble for each act of legislation, and also for each administrative act, or only for the more important legislative measures, and the general administrative superintendence, their assembling and frequently assembling is essential to their retention of the supreme power in their own hands; and they cannot assemble in very large numbers, unless their meeting is a mere pretence, because the coming together for the purpose of exercising the highest political offices, the making of laws, and the conduct or control of the public affairs, implies great deliberation and the full discussion of the subjects propounded.

If the young men are excluded from such meetings, 13 in 51 of the population being under the age of 20, it follows that of every 100 there must meet 38; consequently a district of 20,000 must produce a meeting of 7600 persons, or, allowing for accidental absence, between 6000 and 7000. Such accordingly were the numbers of a full assembly at Athens, and consequently there was rarely any very mature or useful deliberation in the conduct of the business, nor anything like order, even of decorum, preserved. How other provisions in the Athenian constitution, and how habits of procedure, tended to afford some compensation for the evils of this multitude having

the substantial control of state affairs, we have explained at large in our *Political Philosophy*. But had the meetings been more numerous, it is hard to conceive how any checks could have proved efficacious; and even if they could, to assemble a greater multitude was physically impossible. Even supposing a place contrived so that 10,000 men can meet in it, this must be admitted to be the very greatest assembly that can be held, because the human voice can reach no further than a certain small distance, and we know practically that there is a great and painful effort required to make a person heard by so many as 10,000. This, according to the above calculation, answers to a population of only 30,000; consequently, the utmost extent of territory the government of which can be administered by a pure democracy is one having 30,000 inhabitants, or a town of third or fourth rate. For such capitals as London or Paris it would manifestly be impossible; but even for Edinburgh or Manchester it would be out of the question, for there the popular assemblies would consist of 40,000 or 50,000 individuals.

All writers who have treated on this subject have agreed, as might be expected, that these considerations affix a necessary, indeed a physical, limit to the extent of a country governed by a pure Democracy. But it could hardly be expected that love of paradox should so have blinded some, and proneness to theory so far have misled others, as we find proved in the works of some very eminent authors. It may be instructive as well as amusing to give one or two examples.

Montesquieu¹ gives the reasons why different forms of government are suited to different extents of territory, and why, indeed, these can only exist in territories of such extents. A republic must have a small territory, a monarchy one of middle size, a despotism one of great extent; and to this rule he admits only of one exception, that of the Spanish dominions, for which he accounts by referring to the peculiar circumstances of their position. To pass over the contradiction which this theory at once receives from the examples of Great Britain and Austria, but still more from the despotic governments established in the petty states of Africa on the Mediterranean and Red Sea, as well as in some of the Eastern countries, we may observe, that his doctrine being perfectly true as regards one of his positions, the limit to republican government, his explanation is extremely curious from the care with which he avoids the true reason, as it should seem, merely because it is the obvious and natural one, and because he never can resist the temptation to say what is far-fetched, and striking, and surprising, rather than what is true and near at hand. He assigns three reasons why a republic must have a narrow territory; *first*, because in an extensive country great fortunes are accumulated, and men become independent of the state, and raise themselves on its ruins; *secondly*, because in a small community each individual feels a stronger interest in the public prosperity, and abuses

¹ *Esprit des lois*, liv. viii, ch. xvi., xvii., xix., and xx.

of public trust become more difficult; and, *thirdly*, because, if the republic be extended beyond a single town, some chief or prince would endeavour to oppress the people, and would be either dethroned or conquered.

Now, it is difficult to conceive anything more absurd than stepping over the true and plain reason which lay at his feet and before his eyes, in order to run after these three causes, two of which, if they operate at all, work but little to the purpose, and the third seems to have rather a conservative tendency. The true and the plain reason is that which I have assigned, the impossibility of the people acting, that is deliberating, in more than a limited number, and the consequent impossibility of a large community governing itself on the popular model. The reason why extensive empires must be despotically governed is stated to be that firm and vigorous government may supply the want of authority which distance occasions. But the instance of the Roman Empire, and the British Empire, and the Venetian Empire, are decisive against this argument, which indeed proceeds wholly upon the gratuitous assumption that no great vigour can exist in any limited form of government. The discussion is closed with a dogmatical assertion, that in order to preserve the three several principles of republic, monarchy, and despotism, it is necessary (he seems to say, only necessary) to preserve the extent of territory suited to each, but that in proportion as this extent is altered, either by increase or diminution, the principles of the government are changed; a proposition as contrary to the known facts as it is unsupported by any consistent or intelligible reasons.¹

¹ Exception has sometimes been taken to this work as evincing a disposition unjustly to underrate the *Esprit des Loix*. No writer can be himself deserving of confidence who fails to acknowledge the obligations due to Montesquieu's celebrated treatise as having greatly promoted the philosophy of jurisprudence, and, indeed, almost introduced philosophy into the discussions of jurisprudence. But the faults of the work are numerous, and they are great. If it sets a good and valuable example of treating the subject scientifically, it executes the design most imperfectly; for the main pursuit of the author is certainly not truth. To strike, to dazzle, to fill the ear with epigrams, rather than to instruct, is the great object; and hence everything is sacrificed to paradox and to point. Some parts of the work—the latter portion—where the Feudal law, and the French law especially, is discussed, present a strange contrast to all, or almost all, the rest, and simply because the author best understood his subject, and, addressing lawyers on practical matters, was in some sort compelled to regard the substance and the truth of his doctrines rather than the glitter or the glare of his sentences. The want of a sound judgment seems to have been the prevailing defect in this able, and lively, and indeed learned author. How could any very sober-minded and reflecting man fall into such gross errors as we find scattered thickly over the book, even when he comes to details, and to individual cases which should at once have opened his eyes to the errors induced by theory? Thus, in a single book (liv. xx. ch. xv., and xxiii.) we find these two astonishing positions; that a law of Geneva was most admirable which excluded from public office the son whose father died insolvent, until he had paid his debts,—a law of the grossest cruelty and most revolting injustice; and that a country like Poland, which has only one kind of produce—grain—must be injured, and not benefited, by foreign commerce. Certainly nothing can exceed such re-

The other instance which I am to take of men being misled by a love of theory, is that of the late Professor Millar, a man of very strong understanding, well disciplined by study, and above all by legal study, though never by having either practised as a lawyer, or borne any share in public affairs. He was, however, in all respects a very different inquirer from the French president, and had a mind of a much more vigorous and manly caste, although he was apt to run riot in speculation, as we shall more fully perceive when we come to examine his 'History of the English Mixed Government.'

Mr. Millar, in treating of the Commonwealth in the seventeenth century, disputes the position that Democratic government is only applicable to small states or single towns. He conceives this error to have arisen from attending only to the history of the ancient republics; and he lays it down as clear, that a republican government is adapted to the two extremes of either a very small or a very great nation. By republic he means, as indeed we have frequently done in this discussion, a commonwealth without an hereditary chief magistrate, or a chief magistrate chosen for life, and therefore a commonwealth, whether on the Democratic model or the aristocratic. The reason which he gives for his position is wholly unsatisfactory; as, indeed, the position itself is contrary to all experience, and at variance with all sound theoretical principle. In a small state, he says, the revenue falling short of half a million sterling is insufficient to maintain a monarchy. How large, then, were the revenues of the Italian and German principalities? and how few of them had anything like the income which he thus deems insufficient? Again, he considers the great revenues of a large empire as so incompatible with liberty, that the people in self-defence must endeavour to overthrow the monarchical or despotic power. We must, however, observe that Mr. Millar avoids the error into which Montesquieu fell, by laying down his theory as one suited to the facts actually existing. Mr. Millar gives his doctrine only as affirming the better adaptation of the one form of polity or the other to the several extents of territory. The only further remark, therefore, which remains to be made upon it is that the growth and existence of so many monarchies and despotisms in small commonwealths, and so many also in large communities, affords a strong presumption against the practical soundness of his reasoning.

We may conclude this discussion with stating the only sound general principle which can be laid down safely upon the relation between the nature of government and the extent of territory or population in any given country. We may safely affirm that a

voting absurdity. Perhaps it is a similar instance of unsound judgment that gave us such a chapter as this, entitled "*Moyens très-efficaces pour la conservation des trois principes*," and the whole chapter consists of a line or two, stating that the reader cannot comprehend it until he has read the next four chapters.

Democracy, on the purest or antique plan, cannot exist but in a small community; that an aristocracy may have place in much more extensive countries; but that governments of every description may exist, and for a great length of time, in a narrow country, and that monarchical and despotic governments may with equal ease continue their existence in extensive countries. The impossibility of the more pure Democracy existing in a community of considerable extent seems to be the only point which fact and reason alike authorize us to consider well established. It is in vain to confine more closely, as Montesquieu has done, one kind of constitution to one extent of territory.

CHAPTER IV.

EXTENSION OF DEMOCRACY—PROPER FEDERAL PRINCIPLE.

Devices to extend Democracies—Three of these—Boeotian Federacy—Lycian Union—United States—United Provinces—Swiss Federacy—Swiss Democratic Cantons.

As the territory or the population of a country subject to Democratic government becomes increased by the conquest or the union of other dominions, the difficulty of assembling the people to consult and determine renders some change in the government necessary, or some arrangement by which, the government remaining the same, it may become capable of administering the concerns of the extended community. Now there will always be a great reluctance to change the government; and although foreign conquest, at once making the Democratic regimen more difficult, and raising some successful captain to an overpowering influence in the State, may occasion the alteration of the former system, and the adoption of a monarchical constitution, this is not by any means the event most likely to happen; and it has, accordingly, very seldom been the result of such an increase in the number of the people as we are supposing. The continuance of the Democracy is more likely to be effected by subdividing the enlarged territory into districts, each of which is of the moderate extent required for Democratic government, and having a central council to control the whole; or, secondly, by uniting the new acquisitions with the old dominions, each retaining its Democratic constitution, and independently and absolutely managing its own internal concerns, but all governed in respect of matters concerning the whole union by a central body; or, thirdly, by excluding the inhabitants of the new acquisitions from all share in the administration, and holding them subject to the inhabitants and the government of the old Democracy. The first plan cannot be said,

strictly speaking, to constitute Federal Government; it is rather one polity stretching undivided over the whole community; the second is Federal Government, strictly so called; the third is an usurpation of power over conquered settlements by a Democracy, and has no affinity to Democratic government, but is in reality a despotism in which the monarch is not one individual, but the people of a commonwealth. The second is what we have in a former chapter termed the proper or perfect federal union; the third is one species of the improper or imperfect federal union—that, namely, in which the control is vested in a central Democracy, and the internal government of the dependencies, as well as the common concerns of the whole union, are in the hands of that central democracy.

Of the two first kinds or subdivisions of the federal union the most commonly adopted has been the second; the first has rarely been established; and of the second, in the few instances which there have been of it in ancient times, we have very imperfect accounts. The principal one of the first kind was that of Thebes, or rather Boeotia, which is, however, generally represented as having been a federal union of the second kind—that is to say, a league of which each member governed its domestic concerns, independently of all the others, and only sent deputies to the general congress or council, which administered the common concerns of the whole confederate or allied body.

Our information respecting this League, and, indeed, respecting anything that regards Boeotia, is so scanty, that I speak with becoming caution when I thus venture to represent the constitution of the League as of the first kind. My opinion is grounded, not upon the great preponderance of Thebes over the other ten cities, for that was a feature common to all the Greek confederacies, but upon the peculiarity of the diet or central council being a permanent body, in which each city had one Boeotarch to represent it, and Thebes two, and upon the existence of four councils which prepared the business that came before the diet.¹ In other confederacies the diet met only once or twice a-year; and it is inconceivable that the mere affairs common to the whole League, such as questions of peace and war, and alliance, could occupy them permanently and require a constant meeting.—The Asiatic settlement of Lycia appears also to have been governed in this manner; for its twenty-three cities being represented in a congress by numbers of votes proportioned to their several importance, this congress or diet appointed the magistrates of those several cities, an arrangement wholly inconsistent with the second or more complete kind of the proper federal union.

¹ Thucydides, in mentioning the Boeotarchs, speaks of four Councils (βουλαι), and assigns to the Boeotarchs and Councils the ἡγεμονία, or supreme dominion, lib. v. 38. There were, according to him, eleven Boeotarchs; but Thebes probably had two lib. iv. 91.

To this second kind belonged all the other Grecian confederacies, and probably those of ancient Italy prior to the Roman conquests; but respecting these we have hardly any information at all. The modern federal unions have been of the same description; those of the Dutch United Provinces, the Swiss Cantons, and the American United States.

The great American Federacy was, as we are well aware, established with the design of enabling the democracy the more easily to extend over a vast community, and also to preserve the rights and independence of the several states in their domestic concerns.

In the United Provinces the several members of the union were governed in their domestic affairs by a federacy also, of which the towns were the members, except in Friedland and Groningen, where the country had votes in baillages to choose the town council. But in every province a central council or body, the Provincial States, resided in the chief town, and administered the concerns common to the whole provincial union, each member of which administered its own affairs independent of all the other towns and of the Provincial States. That central body, the Provincial States, stood in the same relation to the different towns in which the States General stood to the Seven Provinces and their several Provincial States. This certainly affords the most perfect example anywhere to be found of the Federal Union, and it was manifestly contrived for the purpose of enabling communities more extensive than could be governed by a democratic polity to enjoy the benefits of that system. For originally the constitution of these provinces, and of the towns in each, was democratic, the governing bodies being everywhere chosen by the burghers at large. But early in the seventeenth century the councils, with the consent of the people, as it should seem, became self elected, and the constitutions assumed an oligarchical form. In administering the affairs of these unions, and indeed of each province, great practical inconvenience was always found to result from that provision of the constitution which gave to each member of the unions, both general and provincial, a *liberum veto*, or absolute negative, upon all resolutions regarding peace and war, alliances, and taxation. This was introduced, like all the other arrangements of the government, by the jealousy common to all democracies.

We have already seen (*Political Philosophy*, Part II., Chap. xxviii.) in examining the Swiss Aristocracies, that the Democracy originally prevailing in the three great cantons of Lucerne, Zürich, and Bern was afterwards changed into an Aristocracy of the oligarchical kind, and that the whole country in each canton was subject to the government of the council in the capital. We found, however, that the act of mediation in 1803, and still more effectually the new constitutions of 1814 and 1816, admitted the country districts to a share

in choosing the central council ; so that the present government in each of these cantons falls within the description to which there is reason to think the governments of Boeotia and Lycia belonged.

But the Swiss Confederacy had members which retained to the end their original Democratic constitution, and have it established to this day. The three small cantons of Schweiz, Uri, and Unterwalden, called the Waldstatten, or Forest Cantons, with Glaris, Zug, and Appenzell, have ever been governed upon the most pure Democratic model. The cantons of the Grisons and the Valais, which were formerly only allies of the Swiss Confederacy, but since the new arrangement of 1815 are members of it, have also always had a Democratic constitution, although less purely upon the ancient model than the other six cantons which I have just named. These six formed part of the ancient confederacy, which never assumed so regular a form as the Dutch, having only occasional assemblies of the Diet, a meeting of deputies without officers or funds of its own as a substantive central government. In each state the government is entirely in the people's hands, and none of them are too large to render their meetings absolutely impossible; though as all above sixteen years of age attend, and as Appenzell has fifty thousand inhabitants and Glaris thirty thousand, much larger assemblies than are consistent with convenience are held, sometimes as many as eight thousand attending, nor could anything render them, in Appenzell at least, consistent with the public peace, but the simple habits of a people of shepherds and husbandmen, among whom political dissensions never have prevailed. In the Grisons and Valais, in each of which there are too many inhabitants for a pure Democracy, a different course has been found necessary, and it is exactly the application of the Federal principle. The Grisons, having eighty-five thousand inhabitants, is divided into sixty districts or cantons, each of which administers its own affairs, like the Dutch towns, and, like them, sends a deputy to the general diet of the country. There is less of a pure democratic spirit and aristocratic influence here than in the Valais, where of the ten districts (or *dizaines*) six are purely democratic, and the people entirely govern themselves. The other four are aristocratic. All the ten are represented by deputies in the Diet; and the Diet of both Grisons and Valais send deputies to the central federal body. Thus each valley in these two cantons has its separate popular government, generally on the Democratic model, and the whole are ruled by a central diet, which again is represented in the General Federal Council.

CHAPTER V.

EXTENSION OF DEMOCRACY—IMPROPER FEDERAL PRINCIPLE—ROMAN POLITY.

Roman Provincial Policy instructive—Conquests kept subject—Provincial Government—Subjection of Inhabitants—Their partial admission to privileges—Municipia or free towns; their Government—Colonies—Oppression of the Provincials—Social War—Admission of all Italy—Exclusion of Cisalpine Gaul—Exclusion of Provinces relaxed under the Empire—Universal admission of the Provinces—Elective Measure of Augustus—Influx of Provincials into Rome.

The Roman polity was framed upon the third of the plans which have been mentioned; they reduced the government of the capital to an aristocracy which enabled the rulers to conduct its affairs without constant appeals to unwieldy popular assemblies; and the capital, the city itself and the district in its immediate neighbourhood, governed the provinces in Italy, and the foreign dominions of the Republic, without giving any share whatever of the supreme power to the inhabitants of those provinces, or suffering their voice to be heard in the choice of the functionaries to whom the government of the whole was entrusted. It is exceedingly instructive to examine narrowly the Roman provincial policy, because it shows to what various devices the Republic was driven in order that it might be enabled to extend its dominion, while its constitution remained unchanged. It also illustrates in a striking manner the grand difference between ancient and modern policy, introduced by the happy contrivance of representation.

When the Romans conquered any portion of the neighbouring territory, and gradually in the course of five centuries overran all Italy, they found a rude form of government established among the inhabitants, who either lived under petty chiefs or under a republican constitution, and, generally speaking, formed confederacies or unions, each town retaining its independence in all its domestic administration, but several joining together under a common chief, or common council, in all that regarded alliances and warlike operations. The number of troops which some of them, as the Samnites, could bring into the field 80,000 men, manifestly shows that they must have lived under a federal government. The first thing which the conquerors did upon overpowering any league was to destroy this union altogether, allowing no councils nor any assemblies whatever of the people to be in future holden. They permitted no alliances, of course, to be formed with other tribes; and they strictly prohibited even the intermarriage (*connubium*) of the inhabitants of the conquered district with those of any other.

If the people were sufficiently advanced in civilization to have any public lands, the domains of the prince or of the state, these became the property of the Roman Government; and, beside these, a considerable portion of the lands in private tenure was confiscated. The lands thus acquired were parcelled out among poor citizens of Rome, or given to colonies of Romans, planted there for the purpose of over-awing the natives. The state derived no revenue from such lands except in Campania, having very early given up all right to rent from either colonists or paupers. The only direct tribute imposed upon the conquered people was a tax of one-twentieth on the sale of all slaves; for slavery in Italy, as everywhere else in the old world, was universally established. They were allowed to retain their own laws, their own form of government, and their own magistrates. No governor was sent from Rome; nor did the consuls and senate exercise any authority except in matters of peace and war, and alliances. Within this exception came the important article of troops, which were furnished for all the wars of the Republic, and were paid,¹ as well as raised, by the conquered districts. It is agreed on all hands that at first the yoke thus imposed was not a heavy one. The politic Romans, while they were carrying on so many wars, felt the necessity of conciliating the people of their successive conquests. It was not till the sixth century A.U.C., and after the successful termination of the Second Punic War, when all Italy had been completely subdued, that the oppressions of the crafty and cruel conquerors began to be universally felt all over their dominions.

The inhabitants of the conquered districts were considered by the haughty Romans as an inferior race, and were excluded from all the privileges of Roman citizens. They were not allowed to intermarry with Romans, nor to dwell in the city, nor to hold any offices, nor to have any voice in elections, nor to enjoy any intercourse of sacred rites. Even the numerous levies which they furnished to the army were marshalled in separate and auxiliary legions, not incorporated with the Roman troops. Such was the general rule; but after the Gallic invasion an exception was made in favour of Cære, whose inhabitants had rendered important services in that disastrous campaign. About the year 363 A.U.C. they were admitted to a certain portion of civic rights. The privilege of voting, however, or of filling offices, was withheld. The admission to civic rights of foreigners, or barbarians, as the barbarous Romans were pleased to call them, being once begun, was extended to other cases. Ten years after the Cerites, the Tusculans were admitted. In 415 A.U.C. Aricia, Lanuvium, and some others, were admitted, with the right of voting; and, therefore, of being enrolled in tribes and centuries at Rome: while some towns, as Fundi and Cumæ, admitted to citizenship in

¹ This consideration, as Beaufort well observes (Rep. Rom., liv. vii. c. 1.), explains the passage in Livy (lib. viii. c. viii.), where he calls the Latins *stipendiarii*.

the same year, only obtained the suffrage in 565. The Sabines were partially admitted in 463, and completely in 485. When the suffrage was conferred, the voters were dispersed over various tribes, in order to neutralise their influence. Thus the nine towns of the Veneti were enrolled in nine of the tribes.

But all the privileges thus granted were confined to particular provincial towns. No district, except a portion of the Latins, enjoyed it generally; and these Latins always had greater privileges than the other Italian states, even after civic rights were generally extended. The colonies planted among them were governed by their own, and not by Roman magistrates; they had a community in certain religious rites with Rome; they always had the suffrage after holding any Latin office. The rest of the Italian nations were treated altogether as aliens, with the exception of the towns enfranchised or naturalised, as has been mentioned, and with another important exception, that of the free towns or *municipia*. These varied in the privileges granted; some having the whole, others only part of the rights of citizens; some having their own laws, with only the addition of those portions of the Roman law which governed marriage, wills, and contracts; others being wholly under the law of Rome.¹ They generally framed their government upon the Roman model, changing the names of their functionaries. Thus their senators were termed *decuriones*, their consuls *duumviri*, or *quatuorviri*; their censors *decemviri quinquemales*; their tribunes *defensores publici*. They had three orders like the Romans, senators, equites, and plebeians. In many of them the officers were elective, and the people assembled in comitia to choose them as well as to adopt or confirm the laws which were propounded.

The colonies were planted by Roman citizens, and continued under magistrates sent from Rome, except only those in Latium, which chose their own. The colonial inhabitants, however, ceased to enjoy any votes in the capital, or to be capable of holding any offices there. They were governed entirely by the Roman law, and appear to have been regarded as citizens in all respects, except the suffrage and holding of magistracies. The policy of planting these colonies as advanced posts to maintain their conquests was early adopted by the Romans, and continued to the end of the empire. Fidenæ, one of the first planted, was not above five miles distant from Rome. Before the sixth century they had planted fifty-three establishments of this kind in Italy.

With these exceptions, manifestly introduced for the purpose of strengthening the Roman dominion over the conquered nations, no

¹ Those which retained their own jurisprudence sometimes partially adopted the Roman law of their own free will; and if they did, the municipality was termed *fundus*,—*quoad* the law so adopted. Certain portions of the Roman law all were compelled to adopt (those, namely, mentioned in the next), on obtaining the *civitas*.

Italian people enjoyed any Roman immunities or privileges whatever; all were treated as a conquered and as an inferior race. This treatment they bore for two centuries after the whole of Italy had been subdued. They had served in the Roman armies the whole of this time, and afterwards in their foreign conquests. They had formed the great bulk, indeed, of those armies; for in the year 528 we find that of the whole force, 700,000 infantry and 88,000 cavalry, only 250,000 of the former and 25,000 of the latter were Roman. Yet the treatment they received before Italy was subdued had been mild, compared with the cruelties and insults to which they were afterwards exposed. Roman magistrates in their progress through those countries set no bounds to their insolence and their exactions; the most respectable inhabitants were treated with gross indignities at the caprice of those tyrannical republicans; their public functionaries were sometimes flogged in the presence of the multitude; to punish some imagined neglect, a whole state or kingdom was confiscated; even private individuals, proud of the title of Roman citizen, have been known to flog a provincial to death on the highway for some real or imaginary want of due respect towards the sovereign people. This tyranny, all springing from their inferiority as being excluded from the rights of the state, the Italians bore for centuries, and at length revolted. They joined in by far the most formidable league ever formed to curb the haughty republicans; and bringing an army of 100,000 men into the field they threw off the Roman yoke, forming themselves into a great confederacy, the capital of which was Corcova. An edict of the consuls Craesus and Scævola, A.U.C. 658, was the immediate cause of the revolt. It expelled all Italians as well as other strangers from Rome, unless such as had obtained the rights of citizenship (*civitas*). The allies were successful during the first of the two years that this social war lasted, even by the confession of the Roman historians, from whom alone we have any accounts of its events. Rome was compelled, for her own safety, to grant the rights of citizens to all the states which had remained firm in their allegiance; and the contest was only terminated, notwithstanding the better fortune which is related to have attended their arms the next year, by extending the privileges to all who would receive them. The Lucanians and Samnites were excepted by the Romans, according to the Roman account; the probability is that they refused the proffered terms; however, in 670, they too were comprehended.

The whole of Italy, that is, all to the south of the Rubicon on the one side, and the Arno on the other, was now comprehended in the Roman state. The inhabitants were enrolled in tribes and centuries; they voted; they could hold office; they were admitted to the games; and they could intermarry with Romans. Cisalpine Gaul had for a long time ceased to be regarded as part of the Italian territory; it was reduced in all respects to the condition of a pro-

vince, or rather of two, the cispadane and transpadane, or Gaul on either side of the Po. The rights of the city were not extended to these provinces for many years after the rest of Italy had been naturalised; Julius Cæsar, in 705 A. U. C., completing their admission.

The provinces were treated in a far more harsh manner than the Italian states, even in the latter period of their alienage. They never were at any time deemed allies (*socii*). Their own government was abolished, and Roman magistrates administered all their affairs. The senate exercised absolute power over them and made laws for their government; and although some of their old laws might be allowed to remain in force, yet the Pro-Prætors published their edict or code of laws on entry upon office, as the Prætors did at Rome.

In proportion as liberty declined at Rome, and the rights of the people were disregarded, the scruples became naturally diminished about extending the privileges of the city; and the emperors even might desire to have supporters in whom they could confide when tyrannizing over the citizens of the capital. Julius Cæsar introduced the practice of granting civic rights to the provinces; he began with Cadiz and other towns in Spain, making them, however, pay largely for the privileges bestowed. Mark Antony extended a portion of the same rights to Sicily, but withheld part, and exacted large sums for what was given. It was the advice of Mæcenas that Augustus should admit the whole empire, with a view to secure efficient support from the attachment of the provincial subjects. That wily sovereign, however, held a different opinion, and did not concede the right indiscriminately. His successors pursued various plans, generally making the gift a source of gain to themselves. At length Caracalla extended the right to the whole subjects of the empire.

It appears manifest that the rights thus gradually acquired by the inhabitants of part of Italy and part of the provinces, could not materially interfere with the power exercised by the citizens of the metropolis, at least during the existence of the Republic; for none of those rights could be exercised without removing to Rome. Augustus, indeed, introduced a great change in the manner of voting, by allowing the non-resident voters to enter their suffrages with a magistrate, who transmitted them in writing to Rome; a change which would have produced the greatest alteration in the administration of affairs had it been earlier adopted, but which there was no chance of any one venturing even to propose as long as the people retained their influence, that is, as long as the franchise was of any value. Nor can we doubt that this remarkable measure of Augustus was resorted to in aid of his endeavours to check the corruption that prevailed at the Roman elections. After his time there was nothing like even the name of election at Rome, and the scene of bribery and corruption was now transferred

or confined to the provincial towns and colonies, where offices were still filled by popular choice.

That a great concourse of strangers, both Italian and foreign constantly thronged the capital cannot be doubted; and the extension of the civic rights tended somewhat to increase this influx. In earlier times, and when only parts of Latium and some of the towns had the franchise, we find alarm excited at Rome by the number of Latins flocking thither. Twelve thousand are said to have been summarily ordered to leave the city in the year 550; and as a further check, those Latins only were permitted to reside at Rome who had left children in their own country. But the near neighbourhood of their home much more than the exercise of civic rights was the cause of this influx; and the silence of historians as to any similar inconvenience having ever been experienced from the concourse of more distant people, as well as the fact of no such precautions having been taken for removing their inhabitants, sufficiently proves that few used to visit the capital in order to exercise there the suffrage which they had acquired.

CHAPTER VI.

EXTENSION OF DEMOCRACY—REPRESENTATIVE PRINCIPLE.

No Representation in ancient times—Representative and Federal Principles distinguished—Examples, ancient and modern—Definition of Representation—Definition illustrated and proved—Representatives must be free—Historical Illustrations—England, Old Writs; France; Sicily; Scotland.

In all these attempts to extend the range of Democratic government, and enable it to embrace a larger territory, it must be carefully kept in view that there was nothing whatever of Representation. There was choice, there was election; the people selected a functionary, and appointed him as their delegate, that is, as the delegate of the whole community, to act for it in the convention of delegates from other similar communities. He was to declare their particular will, and not to consult for the good of the whole. Each member of the federal union was heard by its delegate, as if it had been heard by itself. He was like an ambassador sent to treat with the ambassadors sent by other states. He was not a representative sent by one portion of a community to consult with the representatives of other portions of the same community, and to devise the measures best adapted for securing the interests of the whole. On the contrary, he was an agent commissioned to watch over the separate, independent, and possibly conflicting interests of his principal. In some sort the interest of the whole union was to be regarded, because it was the interest of the part which sent him to

preserve the existence of the whole. Mutual protection, the origin of the association, implied mutual aid, and, to a certain degree, mutual sacrifices for the safety of the whole. But in no other sense had the delegate a truly representative character. This is the first and leading distinction between the ancient and the modern principle.

The other distinction is hardly less important. The general council, or Diet, had no concern whatever with the internal administration of the states which were represented in it. The only subjects of its deliberation were those matters which concerned the mutual intercourse of the different states, and their common interests with respect to foreigners, to other states, or other confederacies. Each state was sovereign and independent within itself, and administered exclusively its own affairs. Nothing can more than this show how entirely the delegates must be considered as mere agents or ambassadors, how different their functions were from those of representatives, how completely the government of the whole confederacy differed from a representative government. The utmost that can be said is, that the union was representative *quoad hoc*; representative as far as the international relations of the different members, and the common relations of the whole with foreign powers, were concerned. In the same sense, ministers sent to a congress of the European powers may be said to represent the different states in settling international questions and questions regarding other powers not admitted to the congress.

The Representative principle, the grand invention of modern times, is entirely different in both these essential particulars. It consists in each portion of the same community choosing a person to whom the share of that portion in the general government of the whole shall be entrusted, and not only the administration of the affairs of the whole as related to other communities, or the administration of the affairs of each portion in its relation to other portions of the state, but the administration of all the concerns whatever of that separate portion.

Thus, the delegate from Thebes, or the Bœotarch as he was called, being probably a lord, the chief magistrate in his quality of the deputy to the Diet, only represented the interests of Thebes in that Diet, and he only consulted there respecting the relations between Thebes and the other Bœotian cities, or respecting the relations of the whole Bœotian union with foreign states, as Athens and Sparta. He had no power to treat of any matter concerning the internal government, the domestic affairs of Thebes, any more than of Athens or Sparta. But the delegates from London to the British Parliament, or from Paris to the French Chamber of Deputies, are authorised to consult not only respecting the relations of Paris with Marseilles, and of London with Liverpool, or of all England with America, or all France with Spain, but they have exactly the same au-

thority to consult and enact respecting the police, the magistracy, the civil rights, the criminal laws, of London and of Paris.

The difference here stated between the Federal Delegate and the Representative, does not depend upon the way in which we may regard a representative's duty with respect to the instructions of his constituents, or with respect to the interests which he is bound to consult. Whether he is to obey the instructions of those who choose him, or to follow the course indicated by his own judgment; whether he is to regard himself as representing those who elect him, or the whole state; he is still vested with an authority, and exercises functions different, and different in kind, from those of the delegate to a federal congress. The matters respecting which he is to consult, and on which he is to decide, are especially different from those which fall within the delegate's competence. They include the latter, but their most important branch is foreign to the commission of the delegate. That commission, too, is in its nature somewhat occasional. When a treaty is in agitation, when hostilities are in contemplation or in progress, when any dispute has arisen between members of the Federacy, then the functions of the congress come into active exercise. But the duties of the representative, comprising the administration of internal affairs, the affairs of every portion of the community, of each state in the league, are constant and not occasional. If, indeed, the congress of a federal union had the power of legislating for each of its members added to its proper office of deciding among them, and of representing them all with foreign states—then, indeed, there would be a close resemblance between the Congress and a Representative body; but the union would cease to resemble that of the Federacies either in ancient or modern times.

We may observe another difference not immaterial between the two systems. The modern representative is chosen and appointed merely as such; his only capacity is representative. The ancient delegate was probably in all cases a magistrate, generally the chief of the state who sent him. He was elected to rule that state at home, and he acted for it in the congress, as the sovereigns who attend our modern diplomatic congresses act for their own states, or send their ambassadors to represent them and act for them. He represented the local sovereignty in the general council. The representative represents no sovereignty or power residing among or ruling over his constituents; he represents them as speaking for their interests, in one view of his duties—as consulting for the interests of the whole community, in another view of these duties.

The essence of Representation, then, is that the power of the people should be parted with, and given over, for a limited period, to the deputy chosen by the people, and that he should perform that part in the government which, but for this transfer, would have

been performed by the people themselves. All these several things must concur to constitute representation.

1. The power must be parted with, and given over.—It is not a Representation if the constituents so far retain a control as to act for themselves. They may communicate with their delegate; they may inform him of their wishes, their opinions, their circumstances; they may pronounce their judgment upon his public conduct; they may even call upon him to follow their instructions, and warn him that if he disobeys they will no longer trust him, or re-elect him, to represent them. But he is to act—not they; he is to act for them—not they for themselves. If they interfere directly, and take the power out of his hands, not only is the main object of Representation defeated, but a conflict and a confusion is introduced that makes the representation rather prejudicial than advantageous.

2. The people's power must be given over for a limited time.—This is essential to the system. If the delegation be for ever, allowing the deputy to name, or to join with others in naming his successor, or even if he be continued for his life, and the constituent name his successor, the virtue of the system is gone, and the body of representatives becomes an oligarchy, elective indeed, but still an oligarchy and not a representative body.

3. The power must be given over for a limited period to deputies chosen by the people.—This is of all others the most essential requisite. If any authority but the people appoint the deputies, there is an end of representation; the people's power is usurped and taken from them, and instead of having any concern in making the laws that are to govern them or in administering the affairs of the state, some other power legislates and rules over them, and in spite of them, although it may add insult to injury by the mockery of pretending to govern in their name.

4. Finally, the representatives are to perform that part in the government which would otherwise have been performed by the people.—They are to administer the local as well as the general concerns; they are to govern each part as well as the whole. But they may have a greater or a less share in the government without its ceasing to be of a representative nature. That would be in the strict sense a representative constitution in which the people's deputies were circumscribed in their authority; in which, for example, a prince or a patrician body had the sole right of propounding measures, or in which all control of the public purse was left to the patrician body, or in which all patronage was vested in the sovereign. The extent of the powers vested in the deputies of the people is immaterial to the question whether these be a representative body or not, provided that the deputies come in the people's place. If the democracy was pure, the substitution of representatives makes those representatives absolute while their authority is unrevoked. If the government was mixed, either by the addition of a sovereign

or of an aristocracy, or both, the substitution of representatives gives them a portion of the government, which continues mixed still.

It may perhaps be supposed that this representation is of two several kinds ; as the representative, it may be said, either has the discretion of deciding and acting according to his own judgment, or he is bound to decide and to act according to the commands of his constituents ; and some may suggest that the one of these is a proper or perfect, the other an improper or imperfect kind of representation. But I conceive that this is altogether an incorrect view of the subject, and rests upon a misapprehension of the representative principle. If the deputies are mere delegates sent to do as their constituents direct, their appointment can hardly be said to vary the constitution from what it was before ; the power is still in the people's hands, though executed by an agent. Besides nothing can be more inconsistent, or indeed more absurd, than for men to meet in order to vote as they have been ordered ; nor can anything be more preposterous than for those men to be selected with care in order to perform this mechanical task. It is not of the least importance who are chosen for the purpose. Nay, it is not of the least importance by whom they are chosen. Men appointed by any other power in the state would be just as capable of giving the prescribed votes as the representatives the most carefully selected by the people themselves. The importance is transferred from the proceedings of the deputies to the proceedings of the constituent bodies. The whole government of the state depends upon what passes in the local assemblies, not upon what is transacted in the council of the deputies. When those local assemblies have resolved severally on any matter, the decision of their representatives is a mere ceremony, and a useless ceremony. There is no occasion for them to meet at all. A clerk receiving the instructions and publishing the result would be quite as good as the operation of taking the votes. Nay, a mere publication of the results of all the local meetings held to instruct the deputies, would enable any person to ascertain what the determination had been.

Nor is there any medium between this state of things which makes the whole mechanical and the representative character a mockery, and the state of things which I have described as constituting the definition of Representative Government. Some have with little reflection maintained that a general discretion may be given to the deputy, but that on occasions of extraordinary importance he must obey the instructions of his constituents. Who is to determine what is and what is not an important occasion ? Do we not know that the important measure always means the present measure, and that the people ever give that name to the matter in hand, ever confine their attention exclusively to the affair of the day ? Besides, suppose we had any test of relative importance, the very occasions of highest moment are precisely those upon which it is the most inexpedient

that the direct interference of the people should be allowed. The virtues of the representative system, as we shall presently see, most chiefly consist in the discretion being transferred upon such occasions.

The whole history of the representative principle proves the soundness of the doctrine for which I am contending; it shows that the vesting an entire discretion in the deputy is an essential part of the definition. Both in England and on the continent the original form of the states was a council of the sovereign, composed of his feudal vassals, and convoked to aid him in his government with their local knowledge, or to render their assistance in his wars more hearty, or to receive his edicts and laws, published by his promulgating them at their assembly. The deputies of towns in those kingdoms, especially in England and France, were, after some ages, summoned in order to facilitate the raising of taxes from the trading classes. Yet the writs of summons which we have, both to the town deputies, when they were called, and to the country deputies, when the lesser vassals sent representatives instead of attending in person, always indicated that much more was to be done than the mere delivering of the votes as by the envoys or agents of the electors. The famous writ of Simon de Montford (1264) in Henry the Third's reign, summoned from each county two knights "*de legalioribus et discretioribus*" of the county, and from each city and burgh two citizens or burgesses "*de legalioribus et discretioribus et probioribus*" of the citizens and burgesses; and those assembled were to treat and labour and consult with the king on the most important concerns of the realm, some of which are set forth in the preamble.¹ So the writ of 23 Ed. I. (12) requires to be chosen two burgesses "*de discretioribus et ad laborandum potentioribus*."² In some writs the term used is "*idonei*;" in some it is "*de sapientioribus et aptioribus civibus*," as the writ 11 Ed. I. to cities and burghs.³ The writ summoning the Sicilian parliament, in the same age (1240), required Syndics (Mayors) to be sent "*de melioribus et magis sufficientibus*" We shall presently see (Chap. VII.) that the older Frankish summons required the Counts to be attended by the "*meliores homines comitatus*."

In other countries the origin of representation is lost in obscurity, and the law establishing it being no longer known, we are obliged to collect its provisions from the tenor of the writs issued under them. But in Scotland the statute remains which first called to parliament the representatives of counties in James the First's reign, 1427. The freeholders are to choose "two or more wise men, with power to hear, treat, and formally determine, and to choose a speaker" (Act 1427, c. 102). All these qualifications

¹ Parl. Writs, i. 16.

² Rym. Fœd. 1802. Parl. Writs, i. 29.

³ Parl. Writs, i.; and see Brady, 135.

required of the deputies, and the functions they were called to perform, are wholly inconsistent with the supposition that representatives were originally commissioned merely to deliver a message, or act according to the will of their constituents, or give the vote of those constituents in the assembly. Discretion, ability to transact business, probity, respectability, station, and fitness, were manifestly quite immaterial in a person deputed merely to put in the votes of those who sent him; and the terms consulting, hearing, treating, determining, convey anything rather than an idea of this simple and mechanical function. We may therefore most confidently conclude that the exercise of discretion is essential to the representative character, and that the assembly of deputies is in its nature strictly a deliberative body.

Hence I apprehend it to be clear that the definition above given of Representation may be relied on as strictly correct. It is the people parting with and giving over their power—for a limited period—to deputies chosen by themselves—those deputies fully and freely exercising that power instead of the people.

CHAPTER VII.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF REPRESENTATION.

Near approaches of the Ancients to Representation—Feudal Councils—Franks; Saxons; Spaniards; English Heptarchy—Gemotes—Origin of English County Representation—Errors of some authors—Admission of Town Representatives—Evidence from Statutes—Evidence from Writs—Towns attended to be taxed—Town representation derived from County—Royal demesne Towns first represented—Scotch Representation—Early Scotch Statutes—Difference of Scotch and English Parliaments—Irish Parliament—French Councils and Estates—English Controversy.

It is certain that although the commonwealths of ancient times had not in any part of their political system the representative principle, yet they made so near an approach to it as leaves us in some wonder how they never should have made this important step in the art of government. The delegation of persons to a federal council, and the assembly of the Amphictyons, might easily have suggested the idea of choosing men to represent the whole people in administering the internal affairs of any given state. Indeed the election of magistrates, though apparently less like representation, is in reality more akin to it; for the powers of executive government are given over by the people to the functionaries chosen. This was necessary, because of the impossibility of a whole people exercising these functions. If, then, any of the old republics had been so extensive as to make assemblies of the people impossible, it is likely that the expedient would

have been adopted of delegating the legislative functions to a smaller body. At Athens there were smaller bodies, chosen by lot, to exercise certain branches of government, not only judicial branches, but political, the senate being a select body thus chosen. Had the selection been by choice, and not by lot, this senate would have been a representative body. The extreme jealousy of the people, and their alarm lest any oligarchy should be introduced, prevented the elective principle being applied to the appointment of any powerful body. The blind hazard of the lot was deemed the only security against cabal, and intrigue, and individual ambition.

When the feudal system was introduced into Europe, and the provinces of the Roman Empire became monarchies of a peculiar structure, unknown in ancient times, the barbarians who had overrun the provinces found no political institutions beyond those of an absolute despotism; but they brought with them a practice of restricting the chief's authority, as well as aiding him in his plans, both of peace and of war, by the council of his principal followers. Out of this practice arose the custom of assembling the great men, whether lay or clerical, on important occasions, and afterwards at stated periods, generally on the continent twice a year, at spring and fall.

The Saxon nations were more attached to liberty, and gave their princes less power than the Franks, who founded the French monarchy, and the Normans, who afterwards obtained possession of a portion of France. The extent of the Saxon conquests gave their military chiefs greater authority when their dominions were enlarged than they had ever enjoyed when their possessions were more limited. In this island their institutions partook of the more ancient and free system; while in the south the royal authority was more arbitrary and uncontrolled, except in the Spanish Peninsula, where it was most restricted. But in all the feudal kingdoms, both before and after the complete establishment of the system, there were meetings of great men who assisted the sovereign, and who, in some sort, also set bounds to his power.

In England, under the Heptarchy, these assemblies are by some supposed to have been held as of the people's right, to whom the sharing of the supreme power between the king and the principal men was thought to afford a protection for their liberties. In the continental kingdoms, with the exception of Spain, the assemblies were rather convoked by the sovereign for his own benefit; and he thus both received local information from those who attended, living in various parts of the kingdom, and obtained also their concurrence in any warlike operations for which he might be preparing. But the constitution of these assemblies, both before the feudal system was completely established, and for some time after, was nearly the same in this island, and in all parts of the conti-

ment. There was nothing resembling an elective representation of any class in the country.

It seems well ascertained that those assemblies, called by the Saxons *Mickle-gemotes*, or *Witenagemotes* (Great Assemblies, or Assemblies of Wise, that is Considerable, Men), were attended only by the allodial proprietors—that is, by the persons who owned land without any condition of service for it, either to the king or to subject. It is probable that not even all proprietors of this class attended, but only the more considerable ones; and we are left uncertain if they had a right to attend, or if they only came on the summons of the prince. When the Saxon Hephtharchy was united under one monarchy by Egbert in the ninth century, we can have no doubt that a general gemote was held for the whole kingdom, in place of the Saxon gemote formerly held. Those who attended the gemotes were called *Witan*, literally wise or respectable men. The vassals were not deemed sufficiently independent to attend; and the peasants were in a state of villeinage. The only distinction between man and man was the possession of land, and the holding it free, or by rendering service to another. The landowners and nobles (*Magnates* or *Proceres*) were, therefore, the same body.

When the Conqueror obtained possession of England, he continued the Saxon practice of summoning councils, now called, from the Norman, Parliaments, to which, moreover, he was accustomed in Normandy; and during the earliest of the Norman reigns they were composed in the same manner. But soon after the Conquest a practice was introduced which appears to have afterwards been attended with important consequences. The king commissioned knights in each county to inquire respecting the local customs, the abuses of the law, and the other grievances of the subject. It is probable that the *Missi Dominici* of Charlemagne gave the idea of these commissioners. These knights were sometimes named by the king, and sometimes chosen in the county court—that is, by all the freeholders assembled under the viscount or sheriff. Occasionally the same device was resorted to in order to collect subsidies. Justices in Eyre (*in itinere*) were commissioned to obtain these, and sometimes knights were added for each county. From this practice we may easily conceive that another became likely, the summoning so many knights to the general council, called the Colloquium or Parliament since the Norman Conquest, and which, as we have seen, succeeded to the Witenagemote. Accordingly, on one occasion we find the king summoning (1213) four knights for each county to meet him at Oxford, and discuss or treat with him (*ad agendum nobiscum*) on the state of the kingdom. John had at this time quarrelled with his greater barons, and he probably thought he could obtain favour and support from the freeholders at large. In Magna Charta a provision was

introduced requiring the king to summon to parliament each prelate and greater baron individually by his own letter missive, and to summon the lesser barons through the sheriff and viscount.

The numbers of the Saxon gemote most probably diminished considerably before the Conquest; for although it be true, as Mr. Millar contends (*English Government*, i., 219) that landed property became in the course of time much divided, it is equally certain that allodial property was daily diminished in amount by proprietors feudalizing it for the sake of obtaining protection under powerful lords, in that distracted state of society. In the Conqueror's parliament the prelates and the barons who held of the king *in capite* were in all probability the only members, and continued such for the next four reigns. Nor was the plan for that long period of time introduced of the lesser barons sending some of their members to represent the whole. They did not, indeed, attend in person willingly; but they were frequently required by the king to appear; and their aid in counteracting the influence of the greater barons was a powerful motive for requiring them to perform this branch of the feudal duty, of the service due from them to the sovereign under whom their lands were holden.

It is, however, certain that each prelate and baron could, if absent himself from just cause, appear by his procurator or proxy. A Mercian charter which is extant, has by its mention of proxies misled many political reasoners, and made them most erroneously contend that, as early as 811, there were representatives of the boroughs, because the charter purports to have been granted in the assembly of the prelates, barons, magnates, and *procurators*. It is judiciously remarked by Mr. Millar that the placing this in juxtaposition to magnates shows their proxies to be signified by the term. The mention made of an assent or applause by the multitude to whom the laws or resolutions taken in the parliament or gemote were proclaimed, clearly proves nothing more than that they were present as spectators. Indeed the silence of all the older historians and chroniclers, as well as of all the writs in those days, seems decisive of the question; and when we recollect that the local inferior courts of the shire, the hundred, and the tithing, were all composed of the landowners, as we know from the laws of Henry I.,¹ there can be no doubt that the general and superior court of parliament was constituted in the same manner.

The body of tenants *in capite* who owed this service of attending the king's council or parliament was not very numerous. By Domesday-book it appears that in the time of the Conqueror they did not exceed 605, including about one hundred and forty ecclesiastics. Of the lay barons nine-tenths must have been the lesser or common freeholders, who were summoned through the sheriff

¹ L. L. Hen. I., ch. vii., and Laws of England, vol. ii. Published by the Record Commissioners.

and without special writs, leaving not above forty or fifty of the great vassals. At what precise time or by what steps the attendance of the more numerous body, the lesser barons or common freeholders, was commuted for their choice of two of their number in each county, as representing the whole, we are unable to ascertain. That it must have been before the year 1264, seems clear; for the writ of Simon de Montford in that year directs the sheriff of each county to return two knights; and it can hardly be supposed that he would have loaded his usurpation with the additional odium of only summoning two of the freeholders in each county, had this been an innovation. The argument used by some, that we have no trace of any similar writs between that time and the 18th of Edward I., really proves nothing; for the general writs of summons are equally wanting, and that parliaments were repeatedly holden during that interval, and some of the most important statutes ever made were passed, we know for certain. The writs in 18 Edward I. are extant, and they command the return of knights for each shire, by election (*elegi facias*), to come with full power to consult and treat with the greater barons. Representation of the freeholders or counties was, therefore, at least as early as 1290, fully established, but in all likelihood half a century before; and the step which led to it was probably the appointment of knights as royal commissioners, sometimes chosen in the county courts, in the way already stated.

The admission of the townsfolk to any share in the proceedings of parliament, was a yet more important step. The representative principle had been introduced, but it was only applied to relieve the freeholders from the burthen of an attendance which they had from time immemorial given as a necessary part, first of the gemote, then of the parliament. The citizens had never attended in any way. But whether De Montford thought it would serve his purpose to call them in, by letting them choose two of their number like the freeholders, or whether it had some years before been usual to admit them for the purpose of obtaining the more ready assent of the towns to the payment of subsidies, we are not precisely informed; and the question has produced very warm controversy. To me it appears that the evidence of probability preponderates in favour of the position that De Montford first summoned the boroughs, and that for twenty-five years afterwards his precedent never was followed. The principal ground of this opinion is the evidence afforded by the statutes themselves.

Let us ask now how the parliament is described after Simon de Montford's writ in 1264. The answer certainly is, at first not otherwise than before the meeting so by him convened. The Statute of Merton (40th Henry III.) purports to be made by the king in the assembly of the prelates, earls, and barons, and the provisions made three years after (43rd Henry III.) are said to be made by the king and his magnates. The Dictum de Kenilworth (52nd Henry III.),

soon after De Montford's parliament, purports to be made by the king and his barons and counsellors ; the Statute of Marlebridge next year by the king and the more discreet men, both greater and lesser — that is clearly the greater and lesser barons. The well-known Statute of Westminster 1st (3rd Edward I.), purports to be made by the king, the prelates, earls, barons, and commonalty (commune), but it is to be observed that the proclamation for its observance only states it to have been made by the prelates and magnates (Stat. of Record Com. i., 39.) The Statute De Bigamis (4th Edward I.) only mentions the king, the prelates, and his council. The Statute Rageman uses the same form, omitting the prelates. The Statute of Gloucester (6th Edward I.) mentions the discreet men, greater and lesser ; the 7th Edward I., De Religiosis, is by the king and his council ; and so is the Statute of Acton Burnel, 11th Edward I. The famous Statute de Donis, or Westminster 2nd (13th Edward I.), is by the king, prelates, barons, and council ; the Statutes of Winton and *Circumspecte Agatis* only mention the king ; and that of *Quia Emptores*, or Westminster 3rd (18th Edward I.) mentions only the magnates with the king. The Statute of *Quo Warranto* (18th Edward I.) merely states that it was made at a parliament (20th Edward I.) But whether the burgesses were present in these two years we are not informed. In the 25th Edward I., however, 1297, their right to be present is fully recognized ; for they are named with the knights and magnates as constituent parts of parliament (Statute de Tallagio). As the Statute of Fines (27th Edward I.) mentions only the council ; and that of false money, the same year, the prelates, earls, and barons ; and that of 33rd Edward I., the king and all his council ; it is possible that a complete parliament was not at that time called, unless when a tax was to be imposed.

But the Statute of Carlisle (35th Edward I.) adopts another language ; it purports to be made by the king, earls, barons, and regni sui communitates, the commons or communities of his realm. This expression is the one afterwards most generally repeated. The word is sometimes *communes*, sometimes *communauté*, sometimes *toute la communauté* ; and by comparing together the Statutes 7th, 12th, and 14th, and 14th Edward II., 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 9th, 10th, and 25th Edward III., it is manifest, *first*, that there is no difference whatever in the thing signified by these two forms of speech, and, *secondly*, that both comprehended knights and burgesses. This last proposition is manifest from 9th Edward III., which mentions knights, citizens, and burgesses as “ coming for the commonalty.”

The probability that these statutes so often omitted all mention of knights, citizens, and burgesses, because the matter related not to taxation, is greatly increased by the circumstance that we have the writs of summons to some of these parliaments, and the writs of expenses for their members ; from which it appears that the knights, citizens, and burgesses were summoned, and that many attended.

It also appears that, as early as 3rd Edward I., customs were granted by "tous les graunds del realme et par la priere des communes de marchands." In 11th Edward I., all persons are summoned who can bear arms and have twenty librates of land; and also knights, citizens, and burgesses are summoned as to a Parliament. This was holden at Salop on account of the expedition against Wales, and a subsidy of one-thirtieth was granted, as well as a force raised. In 18th Edward I., the writ is to summon two or three knights to represent the community, which, by the writ of next year, is shown to be for the county only; yet they are called the community of all England. Next year, however, a French invasion being apprehended, citizens and burgesses, as well as knights, are summoned, there being great occasion for supplies. In 24th Edward I., we have the actual return of citizens and burgesses; and in 35th Edward I., though the statute made at the parliament of Carlisle only mentions the commons of the realm, we find the writ of expenses for citizens and burgesses in the collection of records (1 Par. Writs, p. 192). The writ, 23rd Edward I., shows that community is a word of flexible import, for the knights are to represent the "community of the counties," the citizens and burgesses the "community of the towns." Likewise there is in 18th Edward I. a grant by the prelates and magnates for themselves and the community of the whole kingdom, of 40s. on each knight's fee to marry the king's daughter (the feudal law only allowing two marks), consequently this was a grant made without the consent of the citizens and burgesses. It appears, then, that at first these attended only to be taxed.

Thus there seems every reason to consider that from the year 1264, when Simon de Montford summoned them, the towns were regularly summoned as often as a parliament was held, but that they only attended when there was a question of taxing them, and that it was only towards the end of Edward I.'s reign that they attended as a regular and essential part of every parliament.

That the cause of the important change which admitted them was the rise of the towns in wealth during the preceding century, there can be no doubt; as little can it be denied that the summoning their representatives was designed to make them more easily taxed. A singular illustration of this is preserved in some of the old writs still extant, and which shows that other means were used than the assembling their representatives together. In the 10th Edward I. we find the king sending one John de Kirkeby round to all the cities and boroughs, and desiring each of them to give entire credit to whatever he shall state in the matter which he is directed to handle with them severally. What that matter is we are not left to conjecture; for another writ returns the king's thanks for the subsidies which the towns promised him through John de Kirkeby.¹ It may be further observed, that this mission of Kirkeby seems strongly to counte-

¹ Parl. Writs, i. 384, 387.

nance the supposition that the plan of summoning the burghs, adopted by De Montford, had either fallen for some years into disuse, or was not resorted to on all occasions. When the grant of one-thirtieth was made for the Welsh war in 11th Edward I. by the parliament of Salop, the sums paid to Kirkeby were deducted (1 Parl. Writs, 10), so that it appears his mission so far failed as to make a parliament necessary.

That the plan recently introduced of allowing the freeholders to attend by deputy, greatly facilitated this admission of the towns, is manifest. Possibly it suggested their admission. The crown could not require the attendance of so numerous a body; if it was regarded as a duty, they would have had an easy excuse for refusing; if it was regarded as a privilege, the crown could not be called upon to admit so inconvenient a concourse.

It has been suggested, and with great appearance of reason, that the towns first called to parliament were those within the royal demesne, and which were tenants *in capite* of the crown. When a charter of incorporation was granted by the king, the corporate body became tenant *in capite*, and owed such suit and service as was prescribed by the form of the gift. The inhabitants, the individual corporators, did not hold of the crown, but of the corporation, by a peculiar tenure called *burgage holding*. If they had been tenants *in capite* they would have been entitled to the privileges and subject to the duties of the lesser barons or freeholders, and consequently would at all times have been summoned with the county landowners, at first they would have been so called in person, and would have joined with them more recently in electing the knights of the shire.

We can have no doubt that the History of Representation in Scotland was similar to that which we have just been tracing. But one step of its progress is much better ascertained from having been later made—the representation of the counties; and in another particular there is a material difference in the history of the two parliaments; for the towns were represented, while the lesser barons, or freeholders, attended in person.

It is possible that as early as the end of the thirteenth century the towns sent delegates, or representatives, to parliament; for in 1294 we find Fordun mentions that John Baliol called together in a parliament “majores tam cleri quam populi.” As, however, no mention is made of the barons, possibly the “majores populi”¹ may mean the nobles. It is nevertheless to be remarked that in the treaty of marriage which this parliament made with France, the negotiation assumed to bind not only the prelates, earls, and barons, but also the towns (*communitates villarum regni*).² Edward I., too, summoned the states to meet at Perth, in 1305, and they gave full powers to ten persons, of whom two were barons, and two were

¹ Scotchchron., lib. xi. chap. xv.

² Ib., lib. xi. cap. xvii.

to appear from the "*commune*," which most probably meant the boroughs; and this would show that they had been represented in the parliament which chose the delegates. But that Robert Bruce called the Burghs cannot be doubted, because we find in the parliament held 1326, there were assembled "*totus clerus, comites, barones, et universi nobiles, una cum populo*," which last expression occurring after "*universi nobiles*"¹ can only mean the burghs. The right of the burghs to attend all meetings of the estates was therefore clearly established, at least as late as the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Accordingly the laws of Robert I. purport to be made by the "prelates, freeholders, and hail community," which must mean the burgesses, because the freeholders had at that time no representatives (LL. of Robert I. Title, Chap. 34). In 1357, at the parliament held at Edinburgh on the king's liberation, the whole commons, as well as the prelates and nobles, are recited as composing it, and there are given the names of the thirty-seven burgesses who attended, choosing eleven of their number to represent them in the negotiation.² Again, the statutes of Robert II., 1372, purport to be made by the consent of the prelates, earls, barons, and burgesses. The earliest laws, those of Malcolm II., who was king in 1004, purport to be made by the king and the barons. Those of William the Lion (1165) are stated to have been made by the king's consent, the prelates, barons, knights, and freeholders; those of Alexander II. (1214) by the king and nobility, and sometimes the judges are also mentioned. But till the reign of James I., and the year 1427, the lesser barons, as well as the greater, attended in person. In that year an act was made allowing them to absent themselves, provided they sent representatives (1427, c. 102). This condition they never fulfilled, but ceased to attend in person. Accordingly the parliament consisted of the prelates, greater barons, and burgesses, without any county members, until the year 1587, when James VI., having twenty years before made an ineffectual law, 1587, for the purpose of executing the statute of James I., made a more stringent one, which had the desired effect; and at the same time affixed a qualification of 40s. a year of lands holden of the crown, and of residence within the county. Both of these circumstances were required to confer the elective franchise for choosing a commissioner or county member. The sum of 40s. amounts to 3*l.* of our money. Twenty years before an act with the same object had been passed, 1587, c. 33, but it affixed no qualification to the elective franchise, and imposed no fines.

The Scotch parliament, in some very material respects, differed from the English. The different estates always sat and voted

¹ Fordun, lib. xiii. cap. xli.

² Rym. Fœd. vi. 40.

together as one body. The business to be brought before it must first be assented to by a committee of the three estates, called *Lords of the Articles*, appointed till Charles I.'s time by the estates, but generally composed of the king's ministers. The king's assent to laws was not deemed essential to give them force. The parliament, or estates, used to make orders on the king himself; to direct the arming of troops and their levy; to appoint governors of garrisons; to make peace and war; to prorogue and assemble of itself. Nothing could be more complete than the misrule and the anarchy which grew out of these extensive powers; and the prerogative of the crown was reduced to a shadow, unless when it could raise a military force, or obtain the aid of one faction of the barons against another. The accession of James VI. to the throne of England produced the consequences of the imperfect federal union; but in no other instance was its operation ever so entirely beneficial to the less powerful nation; for if the prerogative of the crown was enlarged, and that of the parliament restricted, the country began for the first time to enjoy the blessings of a regular and tranquil government.

The History of the Irish Parliament is meagre and obscure. No statutes of it remain before the 3rd of Edward II.; but many inquirers have considered it certain that as early as the reign of Henry II., when the country was first settled, or so far conquered as to be supposed settled, there was a council of the ruling class, the Irish within the pale, who were the portion of the people subdued by and immediately connected with the English. The Irish without the pale, living in a very rude state, and in continual hostility with the English, were treated by them in all respects as foreigners and as enemies. As the defence against them, and also the incursions made upon them, required constant precautions on the part of the English and their subjects within the pale, the holding of councils became in all probability a matter of necessary precaution. At first the leading men formed this council of the king's governor, deputy, or lieutenant. Afterwards the districts, or counties, into which the country was divided (only twelve as late as Henry VIII.'s time) sent representatives, as did the towns, which were thirty-four in number. A dispute appears to have existed between the English government and the Irish people as early as Edward III.'s reign, about the right of the latter to have their own parliament; for they then asserted it, and refused to send representatives to England. In the reign of Henry VII. an act was passed (called Poyning's law, from the name of the lord-lieutenant) requiring that the king's previous consent should be obtained, at the calling of each Irish parliament, to all the bills which should be propounded; and in Queen Mary's reign this restraint was extended by a prohibition to entertain any matter whatever during the course of the parliament, unless it had been approved by the English Privy Council.

These laws, as is well known, were only finally repealed in 1782. But even during their existence, the power of taxing in all its branches was exercised by the Irish parliament exclusively; no English act was ever allowed to impose any new burthen upon the people.

It is a singular circumstance in the history of representation, that the country in which it was first known is not the one in which it has been carried to its greatest perfection. Our records do not enable us to trace the constitution of the English or Scottish parliaments so far back as we can follow the meeting of the French States-General. We have records of unquestionable authority as far back as the reign of Charlemagne, which show how his courts, councils, *malla*, or *placita* were composed. All those who held under the crown were to come twice a year, in summer and autumn;¹ and an old author, contemporary with that prince, speaks of "*Cætera multitudo*" and "*Cæteri inferiores personæ*."² But early in the ninth century we find proof of the presence of persons who, though not elected as representatives, were yet chosen by the people to fill the places which gave them admission to the Estates. A writ exists of the year 819³ requiring each count to bring with him twelve *echevins*, *scabini*, or *rachimburghers*, if there were so many in his domains, and if not, to fill up the number of twelve by the better kind of people (*de melioribus hominibus ejusdem comitatus*). Now, although this left the choice of the substitutes to the counts, the *echevins* were all elected by the people. For we have also an ordinance of 829, the Capitulary of Worms, which, from the purport of it, is plainly declaratory, or made to confirm the existing laws; and it requires the *missi* to remove all bad *echevins* (*malos scabinos*), and replace them with good ones, chosen "*totius populi consensu*."⁴ There is also in the Alemanic law a prohibition to hear any causes, unless with the assistance of an assessor chosen by the people. It is plain, therefore, that so early as the beginning of the ninth century there was a popular infusion occasionally in the king's *mallum*, or council.

But the French states at no time attained the regularity of the English Parliament, and there never was anything resembling the representation of counties, the barons always attending in person, and never in any instance choosing representatives. Nor does such a representation appear at any time to have been known either in Germany or in Spain, or in any other country than Great

¹ Ut ad *mallum* venire nemo tardet, primum circa *æstatem*, secundum circa *autumnum* (Capit. a.d. 769, cap. 12, ap. Baluz. i, 192).

² Hincmar, de Ord. Pol., c. 35.

³ Capit. ii. cap. ii, ap. Baluz., i. 605.

⁴ Capit. 829; Cap., cap. ii.; apud Baluz., i. 605, 1216. The same law is often re-enacted in the capitularies.

Britain and Ireland, and perhaps the Gothic kingdoms of Scandinavia, where the peasants sent deputies.

In tracing the origin of Representation we have unavoidably gone at length into that branch of the subject which is most interesting to the people of this country, and have been led to examine the most important part of the early history of the English and Scottish Constitutions. There was no other way of avoiding endless repetition when we come to treat of the British form of government than by thus anticipating a portion of that important subject.

The questions upon which it has been necessary to touch have given rise to sharp controversies; the natural zeal of the antiquary having often been exacerbated by the additional vehemence of the political partisan. Among the combatants on either side, the two principal champions of opposite doctrines respecting the earlier or later completion of our Parliamentary system are Mr. Petyt and Dr. Brady, the former having published his "Rights of the Commons Asserted" in 1680, and the latter his answer to it in 1683. There have been many other combatants in this warfare, of more or less name. But in treating the whole subject I have consulted only the true and safe sources of information,—the statutes themselves and the Parliamentary writs, both as published by the Record Commissioners; the early Scotch statutes, unfortunately not yet given by the Commissioners; and the Capitularies of the French monarchs.

CHAPTER VIII.

QUALITIES OF REPRESENTATION.

Evils of Federal Union—Advantages and Disadvantages of Small States—Feebleness of Federal Government; limits to its extent—Representative Government free from such evils—Benefit of entrusting power to small numbers—Of the People being able to meet in small bodies—Prudent measures and orderly deliberation—Increased responsibility of Rulers—Selection of Deputies—People confined to acts of which they are capable—Corruption of ruling class lessened—Diligent performance of Duty—Greater Security to Liberty—Longer preservation of Popular Power—Country admitted to Government—Towns prevented from domineering over it—Real power of the People increased—Illustrations from French Republic and English Commonwealth—Rousseau's error.

The great change in political affairs which we have been tracing to its origin could not be introduced without effecting a most important alteration in the whole structure of government, and enabling men to frame societies both upon a very different scale and upon very different foundations from those of the Commonwealths in ancient times. We are now to consider in detail what those alterations are which this invention of modern times has effected in public

polity; and we shall best perform that task by examining the qualities and the tendencies of the Representative principle.

1. The first and most striking property of the Representative principle is that it enables a free or popular government to be established in an extensive and populous country. This we have already illustrated, by referring to the state of the ancient commonwealths, and the imperfect devices which became necessary for the purpose of enlarging the limits of the state without giving up Republican Government. Beside the other defects of the Federal Union, its manifest tendency to create mutual estrangement, and even hostility, between different parts of the same nation is an insuperable objection to it. Small communities are exceedingly apt to conceive against their neighbours feelings of rivalry, jealousy, and mistrust. Each individual bearing so considerable a proportion to the whole society, that the worst personal prejudices and passions are nourished, and the most ignorant and violent of the people being the most numerous, the tone of the whole takes the turn which these bad passions tend to give it. If any illustration of this truth were wanted, we have only to remind the reader of the Italian republics. The government always is influenced by such feelings, most of all in a democracy, but in a great degree also in an aristocracy, and even in a petty principality. For the rulers themselves in such a narrow community partake of the general sentiment, even if the public opinion should not sway them. Whoever would see further proofs of this position may be referred to the Ancient Commonwealths of Greece. As a Florentine hated a Siennese worse than a German or a Spaniard, or even an infidel in modern times, so of old did an Athenian hate a Spartan or a Theban worse than a Persian. Now the Federal Union, by keeping up a line of separation among its members, gives the freest scope to these pernicious prejudices, feelings which it is the highest duty of all governments to eradicate, because they lead directly to confusion and war.

It may further be doubted if the existence of a small community is of itself desirable for the improvement of society. Undoubtedly great public spirit may be expected to prevail in such a nation, and the feelings of patriotism to be excited, or rather to be habitual with the people, each individual of whom feels his own weight and importance instead of being merged and lost in the countless multitude of a larger state. But this advantage is more than counterbalanced by the attendant evils of petty, contracted ideas, which such a narrow community engenders, and especially by the restlessness which arises among all the people, when each takes as much interest in the state's concerns as if they were his own. There is thus produced both an over zeal, a turbulent demeanour, a fierce and grasping disposition, hardly consistent with the peace of the community; and also a proportionate inattention to men's private

affairs, inconsistent with the dictates of prudence, as well as a disregard of the domestic ties, equally inconsistent with amiable character and with the charities of private life.

It would further appear that limits may be much more easily set to the bounds within which a Federal Union can be established, than to those within which a representative system may conveniently exist. For the central government in a Federacy is of necessity feeble. It is more like a congress of ambassadors from many nations than the council of one nation. Each person is only animated with zeal for his own state, while none feel for the general welfare. But a representative government may extend over the largest dominions, and they who compose it may exercise an authority at once vigorous and considerate, thinking for the advantage of each portion of the community, as well as consulting for the welfare of the whole.

2. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the only benefit of the representative principle is that one which strikes us first, the enabling a popular government to extend over a large territory. It is not even the greatest of the advantages derived from the principle. The next benefit which we are to consider is more important; it is the prevention of mob government by the substitution of a small body of men to whose hands the whole power of the people is confided. This at once puts an end to the tumultuous meetings, and to the rash proceedings of large popular assemblies. Mere clamour can no longer carry the day, and riot is banished from the public assembly. The bare diminishing of the numbers composing such assemblies would produce this effect. If, instead of 5000 or 6000 only, 200 or 300 were to meet, although they were chosen, and chosen indiscriminately from the same body, so that the two meetings must be composed of the very same materials, yet the proceedings of the lesser number would be much more orderly, and their resolutions much less the result of sudden impulse, and the dictate of momentary clamour or enthusiasm.

3. The representative system is of exceedingly great benefit to good government, as well as to public tranquillity, by enabling the people to meet and transact business in smaller bodies than must assemble if they acted for themselves. The reduction of the numbers assuredly would of itself be a material advantage, even if the same matters were discussed before such a meeting, and the same powers were exercised by its members as when the whole body unrepresented and undivided carried on the government. A small number of persons are always more orderly in their proceedings, and less under the influence of clamour and of sudden impulse than a great number even of the same persons; and they, who in a private interview will listen to reason and decide rationally, will under the contagious excitement of a multitude shut their ears to all common sense, and resolve on the most absurd things. Therefore,

if the supreme power could be subdivided, so as to let one small meeting dispose of one matter and another of another, or if, by a kind of federal plan, every matter should be discussed and determined by the whole community meeting in small bodies and communicating the results of their several deliberations to a central council or executive magistrate, a far more rational course would be taken than if the same individuals were congregated in one large body and decided in its assemblies. So if on each material question the different constituent bodies in any state having a representative government were to instruct their deputies, and those deputies were strictly to follow their directions as ambassadors rather than representatives, a very great improvement would be made upon the ancient constitution of popular government. As a representative system it would sin against all the fundamental rules; but compared with the old system it would be a substantial improvement.

4. This, however, is not all : the lesser body of representatives so chosen are more responsible than the greater body who chose them. They act more under the influence of being personally answerable for what is done. Each person in a small body feels that he is looked to by his fellow-citizens as the author of the measures adopted. In a large meeting the divided responsibility leaves each individual almost free.

5. But the smaller body is not composed of the same materials as the larger, and now we come to the greatest quality of representation. The multitude of ignorant and foolish persons greatly overpowers the small number of well-informed, and reflecting and wise persons in every community. The whole citizens meeting to discuss measures, decide according to the sense, or rather the folly, the lights, or rather the ignorance, of the multitude, which forms necessarily the great majority of the assembled people. But the representatives are chosen; they are selected; they are set apart from the mass, because of some qualities that distinguish them from that mass; these qualities are such as give a pledge of their greater fitness for the functions of government. In one man it is greater wisdom; in another more ample wealth; in a third higher birth; in a fourth greater information. In almost every one integrity or respectable character is a ground of choice, and prudence or discretion, itself a virtue, the parent of some and the guardian of all the virtues, is hardly ever left out of the account in determining the choice of those persons who are to act for the community in the conduct of their most important affairs. Hence the influence of the ignorant, the heedless, the stupid, the profligate, is reduced to a small amount in the conduct of the government, for, generally speaking, the same persons who being unfit to be themselves trusted with power would ill use it, are very capable of making a good choice enough of a representative. The temptations to act recklessly or corruptly

are much less powerful in the election of a representative than in the government of the state.

6. This leads to another and almost an equal advantage of the representative principle. The one matter brought before an elective body, a body whose functions are confined to the choice of representatives, is very much more simple and easy than the various matters which are brought before the rulers of a country. Those men who would be wholly unfit to be trusted with the decision of a question touching foreign policy, or jurisprudence, or domestic economy, may be tolerably well able to select a person as their representative. It requires no great degree of information, and no profound acquaintance even with man's character, to tell which of several candidates is the abler, the more discreet, or the more respectable person.

7. The persons thus chosen are on that account, on account of the qualities which recommend them to the electors, less likely to be corrupt, to rule for sordid interests and act from profligate views. But their small number, their individual responsibility render them much more likely to be afraid of acting corruptly, how little soever they may value virtuous conduct or unsullied reputation for its own sake. The same persons, who among a vast multitude might take a bribe, would feel afraid of being bought were they members of a small body. Thus, the electors may be bribed; and yet the men returned by such foul means, nay, the very men who obtained their election by bribery, may be very far from venturing to act corruptly in administering the trust thus bestowed. Very little reliance could be placed on the purity of a multitude in deciding upon questions, the determination of which certain possessors of large wealth had an interest in affecting by corrupt means; yet the same wealthy persons would find it a very difficult matter to tamper with the representatives of that corrupt body. If any one doubts this, let him only consider how often the charge of bribery is preferred against constituent bodies, and generally with the absolute conviction of the imputation being true, however rare the cases may be in which its truth can be proved; how extremely rare it is to see any charge, even to hear any suspicion flung out against any member of the representative body. I have sat in Parliament for three and thirty years, and I never even have heard a surmise against the purity of the members, except in some few cases of private Bills promoted by Joint Stock Companies. I had been considerably upwards of a quarter of a century in Parliament before I ever heard such a thing even whispered, and I am as certain as I am of my own existence, that during the whole of that period, not one act of a corrupt nature had ever been done by any one member of either house. I question if any one election had ever taken place during the same time, in which many electors had not been influenced by some corrupt motive or another in the exercise of this sacred trust.

8. It is one of the most important benefits of representation that

it secures the faithful and regular discharge of the political functions. Wherever the people at large are to rule, they have no chance of constantly applying to the discharge of their public duties : the detail of administration cannot interest them ; it demands too much time and patience to master ; and their ordinary business, the daily labour to gain their daily bread, renders constant attendance at public meetings impossible. We may remember the difficulty of obtaining the attendance at Athens which the law required ; even among that nation of politicians it was necessary to bribe the citizens with pay, and sometimes to compel them by force. The division of labour never was more happily applied than by the representative principle, which, leaving to the people the office they are fit for, gives to the deputy the work he can best do ; and thus secures it being both done and well done.

9. It must also be borne in mind that the most effectual security for the people's rights and liberties is not their exercising the whole power directly, but their having a select body of able watchmen to guard those invaluable possessions. A control over their watchmen, the power of naming them, the power of removing them, is all that the safety of their freedom requires them to possess. Any power beyond this, even if they were qualified to exercise it well, would be wholly useless for the purpose. The deputies can just as effectually protect them. But in fact the deputies can more effectually protect the liberties of their constituents than those constituents can themselves. A very large body of men are much less likely to be always on their guard against encroachments. They soon prove weary of watching, and begin to slumber. They are easily split into parties by intrigue ; and they are far from being proof against corruption. Their measures to resist a common enemy, foreign or domestic, are never framed with such wisdom or executed with such vigour as a small body of able and experienced men can bring to the performance of this task. Those men are ever on the watch ; they have no other duties to discharge, no other business to follow. Thus the liberties of the people are more secure in their hands ; and the power of the people, the only power they can safely exercise, that of election, is more likely to be preserved, than if the whole government were in their own hands.

10. It is not an unimportant circumstance in the consideration of this subject, that the representative system enables the scattered inhabitants of the country to bear their part in the administration of public affairs, whereas the congregated masses of the people in towns could alone partake of the government, were each man to appear on all occasions in his own person. Unless upon rare emergencies the country people cannot be brought together. The townsfolk are always easily convened. You may assemble the countryfolk once in a year, or once in three years, to choose delegates ; oftener

they never can be convened. The townspeople are always ready to attend any meeting. Giving all, both town and countrymen, an equal right to attend, nay, summoning all to attend alike, has no kind of effect. To the townspeople, who live within a few paces of the place where the meeting is held, attendance costs nothing; to the peasant, who has to give up a day or two of his work, the attendance becomes impossible: he will come now and then to choose a delegate, but never on ordinary occasions. Hence in all republics, before the representative principle was known, the whole government of each state was necessarily in the hands of the towns. That principle has enabled the other half or more of the people to take their equal share in the administration of the common interests of the whole state.

11. Finally, it is the great, the inestimable advantage which this principle secures, that it gives the people their share in the government, without the inconveniences and mischiefs which we have seen that it avoids. The direct exercise of the supreme power by the whole people is indeed a scheme of polity which may at first sight appear to give them more sway in the administration of their concerns, than the scheme which for a certain time transfers the supreme power to their representatives. But when duly considered it should seem that this is really not the case. In the *first* place it is an abuse of words to call that an exercise of power by any person which is only the appointing him to a function for which he is utterly unfit. Who would deem it any power conferred upon him to be allowed the privilege of cutting off a sick man's limb, or trepanning one who had his skull fractured? But, *secondly*, if the mischiefs of the ignorant and unskilful performance of these functions all fall upon the party himself, the abuse of terms is much more glaring. Who would call it a restraint upon his liberty to be precluded from mangling his own limb, or driving the saw of the trepan into his own brain? The good of the whole is the end of all government: any power inconsistent with that is bad for the whole body of the state. But independently of such views, which belong to another consideration of the subject, when we speak of power being vested in certain hands, we always mean a rational investment, an investment in hands capable of exercising the power bestowed. Lastly, it is much more safe and beneficial for the people themselves, and more beneficial with a view to their power itself, the only point now under consideration, that they should not govern directly and in the mass. If trusted with the whole direct power, or indeed with any portion of the government directly, we may be assured that they never can long retain it. The certainty of its abuse, and the inevitable mischiefs which its unskilful exercise must entail upon the state, will, after a short time, assuredly occasion a revulsion, and the direct power will be transferred to other branches of the community, or to an oligarchy at

home, or to a sovereign at home, or to a foreign state; and it will be transferred entirely, without any control being left in the people's hands, even that control which they are well capable of exercising. The memory of the mischiefs which their incapacity or corruption occasioned will be the security of whatever tyranny is founded upon the ruins of the democracy. Even when the body of the people did not formally exercise the function of government, yet possessed too constant a control over their rulers, so that the salutary operation of the representative principle was impeded, and the popular voice ruled too directly, we have seen the fatal effects of their misgovernment in propping up the most rigorous tyranny, and stripping the people of all control, all voice in the management of their concerns. The mob influence, which was the mainspring of the Reign of Terror in France, enabled Napoleon to usurp the government, and make it absolute, exhaust the country by his conscription, and lay it at the feet of foreign nations by his wars. The cruel executions which the people called for in England, and the influence of their fanaticism over the Long Parliament, prepared the way first for the military despotism of Cromwell, and then for the restored tyranny of the Stuarts. The French people would have been more powerful in the just sense of the word, and would have retained their sway longer, had they been content to wield only the power which they were fit to exercise; and the English would neither have required a restoration in 1660, nor a second revolution in 1688, had they been satisfied with electing representatives, and abstained from interfering with the exercise of the trust which they had bestowed.

It thus plainly appears that nothing can be more senseless than the opinions of those who have regarded the only liberty enjoyed by a people living under a representative government as that which they have during the election of their delegates. Rousseau, with his accustomed shallow dogmatism, says, that the English are free then only, at all other times "they are slaves"—"they are nothing."¹ This is not even true of the people's power, as we have seen; but Rousseau confounds liberty with power. The loss of all direct power, if it were ever so complete, would not necessarily work a loss of all liberty. The rights and the freedom of the people would be protected by their deputies, and all encroachments of arbitrary power would be effectually prevented. The only risk would be those deputies forgetting their duty, abusing their office, and joining with the usurpers, oligarchical or monarchical. But this is prevented by the limited character of the trust, and the people retaining the power of dismissing the representatives who have betrayed them. This is all the power which it can ever be necessary to leave in the people's hands in order to protect their liberties; and we have shown how much more effectually this protection is

¹ Cont. Social liv. lili. ch. xv.

afforded by the representative than by the direct exercise of their authority.

Such are the great and manifest advantages conferred by the Representative principle, such the evils of obstructing its full and entire operation; and on these accounts it is that we justly and confidently consider it as the greatest of all the improvements which have ever been made in the science of government and legislation.

CHAPTER IX.

MODIFICATIONS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE PRINCIPLE—THOSE ONLY AFFECTING THE MODE OF ELECTION.

Two kinds of modification; one regarding the manner of voting, the other limiting its extent—Double Election—Its nature in France—Its evils—Inconsistent with the Representative Principle; duty of electors ill performed; corruption facilitated; minority made powerful—Does not lessen the Popular Power—Combined choice—Manner of Voting—Distribution of Representation—Proportion to population—Errors in English System—Voting by Ballot—Contrary to principle—Ineffectual—Encourages Falsehood—Protects Tradesmen—Useless to Tenants—Means of Preventing Corruption and Expense—Efficacy of Registration—Inefficacy of Ballot—Disfranchisement—Extension of Franchise—Of Electoral Districts.

Hitherto we have only considered the Representative principle generally, and examined those qualities which belong to it in whatever manner it is applied. But there are various modes of this application, and it is of great importance to explain these. Some of them, though productive of important effects, and tending to modify by extension or restriction the principle itself indirectly, yet do not directly extend or impair it. Others have a direct influence in impairing it, and rendering it less beneficial and less severe.

I. To the former class belong the principle of double elections, the method of combined choice, and the manner of giving the vote.

1. The principle of double election appears to have been borrowed from the complicated voting of the Venetian and other Italian governments. Possibly it might have been suggested by the ancient Federal system, in which the people chose magistrates, and those magistrates appointed deputies, who voted in the congress. It is, indeed, not impossible that the mere exercise of the Representative power itself may have suggested this refinement; because the deputies elected by the votes of the people, too numerous to vote upon measures themselves, vote on these measures, and so it may have occurred that the people were too numerous to vote in the election of deputies, and that therefore they could delegate to a smaller body the choice of those deputies. But be its origin what it may,

the plan consists in the whole body of electors choosing a smaller number to exercise for them the power of choosing Representatives. This principle was adopted in France under the two Republican Constitutions which were established in 1791 and 1795.¹ It was continued under the Consulship and the Empire; it was retained after the restoration, 1814 and 1815, in the constitution under the charter; and it was only abandoned in 1830 upon the change which then took place. The assemblies which chose the electors were called the "Primary Assemblies." Those which chose the deputies were called "Electoral Assemblies or Colleges." The Directorial Constitution of 1795 gave one elector for every two hundred of the Primary Assembly. The constitution of 1799 and 1804 had a much more complicated principle. The commune (or parish) chose a tenth of their number, which was the communal list; these chose a tenth of their number to form the Departmental list; and these again a tenth to form the National list; so that the number of the primary electors was reduced to one in a thousand; and this thousandth were only eligible to the senate, tribunate, and legislative body by the choice of the public functionaries and senators together.

All such double, or more than double, elections are fundamentally bad, and proceed upon a principle radically vicious.

1. They are wholly inconsistent with the representative principle. If a person is fit to choose an elector, he is fit to choose a representative. He may, as we have seen, be wholly unfit to decide upon a law or a measure of policy, and yet be fit to select some one to act for him in discussing and determining those important matters. But if he is only supposed fit to choose the elector, how is the line of his qualifications to be drawn? It is much easier to determine whether or not any given person is fit for the functions of a representative, than to determine his fitness for an elector; because it is difficult to decide what qualities are especially required for making a man a good elector. This whole process assumes that a person may be fit for being an elector who is not fit for being elected; but it fails to show how that line is to be drawn.

2. The chances of bribery are much more numerous where the electoral body is small, than where it is numerous. The whole people select a few, and these few having no function whatever to perform except choosing others, they are set up as a kind of mark at which all the missiles of corruption may be launched. They are sure to be persons of less respectability than would be chosen as representatives, because the trust reposed in them is incomparably less important and requires less capacity to execute it. Besides their office is only occasional and temporary; they feel in proportion to its less duration less responsibility. Therefore they

¹ It was not part of the Constitution of 1793.

are in every way more exposed to temptation and less likely to resist it.

3. But a most serious evil of the double election is its tendency to place the power in the hands of a minority of the community. If all the electors of a district choose the deputy there is a possibility, but not a great likelihood, of the minority of those representatives being persons returned by great majorities of the voters, and the narrow majority being returned by small majorities. But this becomes much more probable if, instead of choosing the deputy directly, there is an intermediate election. Suppose a county or department having two thousand votes to be divided into twenty districts, each of which by a Primary Assembly chooses one to the electoral College. If the twenty electors are divided in the proportion of eleven to nine, as to the candidate for the representation, and all the eleven are chosen by fifty-one to forty-nine in these primary assemblies, and the nine are chosen unanimously in theirs, then the candidate who has only five hundred and thirty-nine votes is elected to represent the whole two thousand voters, and the other is rejected who has one thousand four hundred and thirty-nine. This, of course, being an extreme case, is not likely to occur; but in various degrees it is very possible, and the double election gives every facility to intrigue, corruption, and stratagem on the part of the minority. All the districts in which the people are nearly unanimous will be neglected, left unassailed as hopeless; and the effort will be made to bring over or intimidate enough to constitute a majority in those districts where the numbers are more nearly balanced. In each of these the purchase of a few votes will secure the return of an elector, and also the return of such a representative as the great majority of the people would reject. This risk, too, is wholly independent of the other risk arising from corrupting the electors. We are now supposing the electors to be perfectly incorruptible, and that the effort is made in the primary assemblies alone.

But although these are the serious objections to Double Election, yet it has no direct operation in diminishing the power of the people, or vesting in an oligarchy their influence over public affairs and the course of the government. The government is still popular in every sense of the word, and the people are still secured in the possession of their rights, because they have the power in their own hands of choosing persons who will elect men deserving their confidence, and men removable by the next choice of electors in case they betray their trust. To instruct deputies on all points of their conduct is impossible, because it is impossible to foresee all the events that may occur after an election and before the several measures come under the consideration of the representatives. But to instruct an elector is perfectly easy, because the only point is the simple one of who shall be sent to

represent the district, and that choice is to be made immediately and before any change of circumstances can have taken place. Hence the power of the people and their control over the representatives cannot be said to be materially diminished by the double election, nor the responsibility of the representatives be much lessened. Certainly whatever difference is made in both must be unfavourable. The power of the people will be a very little diminished, and the responsibility of the representative a very little lessened.

There is another way in which the elective process may be modified; there may be a Combined Choice. One body only of the people may be allowed to name a certain number of candidates, and out of these another class may select the representative. Thus all persons whatever may choose ten candidates, and all persons of a certain income may out of these select the representative. There are not such serious objections to this as to the former modification; but it is exposed to another which does not necessarily arise against the former; the choice of so many as ten or more candidates (and they must be numerous to give the selecting class any real power of choice) gives rise to much confusion, and to the great risk of votes being thrown away, and of a minority combining to choose their candidate, while the majority are voting without concert. But the main objection is this, and it is insurmountable. The class which chooses the candidates, or eligible persons, may usurp the whole election, and exclude the other class altogether. They have only to choose a single candidate who is at all fit for the place of representative, and all the rest plainly and certainly unfit, and the power of selection among the names on the list becomes a mere nullity.

The manner of taking the vote is the only other modification that requires examination of the class of contrivances now under consideration; and this becomes very important with a view both to the right exercise of the elective power, and the preservation of the peace and the morals of the community.

Three points under this head require our attention—the distribution of the representation, the protection of the voter, the prevention of error, corruption, and expense.

1. The principle which ought to govern the distribution of the representation is as nearly as possible to apportion the same number of representatives to the same number of inhabitants in any district. I say as nearly as possible; for it does not seem an essential requisite to fair representation that it should be rigorously proportioned to the numbers of the people. On the contrary, there are manifest objections to this equal distribution in a country of which the population is very unequally dispersed, and which has towns of great magnitude as well as extensive districts thinly peopled. Suppose the rule of equal distribution were

applied to England, its five hundred representatives would be so divided that the metropolis would return fifty-five. So large a body always on the spot, and representing constituencies so numerous also in the immediate neighbourhood of the parliament and the government, would have an influence exceedingly dangerous to the balance of the constitution and the independence of the legislature. The case of Paris is still stronger; for though its inhabitants are much less numerous in proportion, the excessive power and influence of the capital in France is one of the great practical evils of that country. In either case the formation of a party, and the acting in concert, is far easier when so many members come from the same place; and to this must be added a consideration common to both countries, but of especial weight in France, that the natural influence of dense masses of people, independent of their weight in the representation, seems to warrant rather giving them a smaller proportion of members than is answerable to their numbers. But it cannot be doubted, on the other hand, that the giving to a comparatively insignificant town like Kendal or Harwich, of ten or eleven thousand inhabitants, as many representatives as to the West Riding of Yorkshire, with its million of people, is a gross absurdity, and contrary to the very first principles of the representative system. The electoral system in France is free from all possibility of this evil; for the deputies are chosen by districts, without any regard to towns.

Another principle ought to govern this distribution; each class and interest in the community should be represented. Suppose there were one important branch of trade confined to a single district, and the number of inhabitants in that district did not warrant its returning a deputy with a view to population; still it should be represented with a view to the trade driven by it. So, important professions should be represented; and important classes of properties. Our English system sins against all these canons, and sins grievously. It allows but one test, the ancient distribution of men into towns. Harwich and Kendal are represented—the former by two members, the latter by one only—because these are towns; while districts of the country containing ten times as many inhabitants are allowed about the fifth part of a member each. Again, property is the qualification of a voter, and yet only one kind of property is regarded; so that the greatest mass of the property next to the land, the eight hundred millions belonging to the public creditor, are wholly unrepresented.

2. The protection of the voter's independence in his exercise of the franchise is an object of primary importance. As workmen and labourers are under the influence of their employers, tenants of their landlords, and shopkeepers of their customers, it has been thought by many reasoners necessary that we should enable these dependent classes to give their votes without any control; and the

obvious method of doing this is said to be the power of secret voting, or the ballot.

The advantages of this mode of proceeding are obvious; and they are exactly applicable to the case: the remedy is a specific; it is directly calculated to arrest the evil. But there are considerations of importance which have not always been sufficiently considered by the advocates of the plan. Of these one of the most important is this: that the elective franchise is in the nature of a public trust or duty, and ought, therefore, to be executed under the responsibility of the functionary, the elector's conduct being known. It is certain that a much more important vote than the elector's is the representative's; and it is as certain that the representative is exposed to equal disturbing influences in the discharge of his duty. How many men dread the frown of the court! How many professional men are exposed to serious injury from the possessors of power? How many naval and military men are dependent upon the favour of the government, and liable to be all but ruined by its hostility? Yet no one can seriously contend that votes in Parliament should be given secretly; because the constituent has a right to know how his representative votes. It must be admitted that the reason for publicity in the elector's case is not so strong; yet is there a reason, and of nearly the same kind. For all the community are interested in the honest and enlightened exercise of the right by each voter; not to mention that where there are any classes excluded from voting, they are represented by the classes which possess the franchise, and have a right to know how it is used.

But it is another argument against the ballot, that men can never be prevented from trying to influence those under their control; and that, do what you will to prevent it, they will always seek to discover how their workmen, tenants, and tradesmen have voted. Indeed the whole argument for the ballot assumes that they will do so; it proceeds upon the assumption that one class has power over the other, and is resolved by all possible means to exert this power. Then how can the unfortunate voter, who has secretly given his support to the adversary of his patron, conceal his act, except by a course of falsehood—a course maintained from one election to another? Cicero's description affords but a slender recommendation. "The ballot," says he, "is a favourite with the people, because it gives men an open countenance, while it conceals their thoughts, and lends them a licence to do whatever they please.¹ Surely these are very powerful reasons for disliking such a plan; unless there be a certainty, not only that the evil of compulsion is generally prevalent, but also that the remedy will prove quite effectual.

¹ Grata populo est Tabella, quæ frontes aperit hominum, mentes tegit, datque eam libertatem ut quid volunt faciant.

Both of these positions, however, appear to be more than doubtful. It is certain that the advocates of the ballot have both exaggerated the malady and over-praised the cure. It is, perhaps, nearly as certain that the adversaries of the ballot have considerably exaggerated the evil consequences of it; but chiefly because, like its advocates, they have overrated the effects it is likely to produce. The truth really is, that very many of the voters, even in the classes for whose protection the ballot is proposed, would vote exactly in the same way were their vote given ever so secretly. The circumstances which create the influence so much dreaded have a most direct and universal operation in producing a disposition of the inferior to follow the course of the superior party. Almost all tenants take an interest in favour of their landlord, and have a pleasure and a pride in supporting the candidate of his choice. The majority of workmen always feel disposed to support the party of a kind and considerate employer; farm labourers, without any exception, do so; and the greater part of manufacturers or artisans would follow the same course; though certainly these last are not so much under the employer's influence. Shopkeepers are the class to whom the secrecy would give the greatest protection, and in their case the ballot would have most effect. As for tenants, even the few who would go against the landlord could not be effectually protected; because whatever tenant was suspected would either be required to pair off with an adverse voter, or to abstain from voting altogether; and thus the whole protection of the ballot would be defeated.—Some other supposed advantages of the ballot we shall have occasion to consider under the next head.

3. The means of preventing expense, corruption, and error, are next to be examined.—A well-devised system of registration seems one of the most effectual. If care is taken to scrutinize each claim at the time when there is no contest to excite the passions and prevent just decisions, the process of voting will be very short and very simple. But all this difficulty, and the necessity for a register, assumes that the franchise is confined to particular classes, of which we are hereafter to discourse. Appointing a variety of polling-places, and having all the elections over in one day, is a most wholesome expedient for preventing expense and checking intrigue. Excluding all but residents from a vote is another device most useful for attaining the same end, and there can no reason whatever be given for allowing any person to vote in more than one place. The attaching a vote to all property of one kind, as our law does, and to property of another description only giving the right when combined with residence, is contrary to every principle.

The prevalence of bribery is the most difficult subject with which we have to deal in considering the defects of the representative principle; and the ballot has been proposed with much confidence

by sanguine men as the best means of attaining this most desirable object. I own that I cannot at all adopt this opinion. Suppose the wish for a seat to remain unabated—the means of corruption to continue unimpaired—the disposition to bribe and the readiness to be bribed being the same, I conceive that the secret voting would only give rise to an arrangement much more likely to extend corruption than to restrain it. A class of *vote-contractors* would be formed, who would bargain with the candidates, or with their agents, or with their friends, to receive so much in the event of the election being won, and nothing in the event of it being lost. Suppose such an agent bargaining to receive 1000*l.* on these terms, he immediately sets about agreeing with three or four sub-contractors, each of whom is to have 100*l.* or 150*l.* if the election is won, and not otherwise. These sub-contractors have an interest in bringing as many votes as they can buy for five-sixths of the sums agreed upon, taking to themselves the remaining sixth; and each voter whom they bribe is to be only paid in the event of success. Thus every contractor, sub-contractor, and voter is interested directly in the success of the candidate; and a set of agents is created such as no election on the old plan can ever call into existence. Who can for a moment doubt that this system of corruption must prove more active and more universal than any that now exists?

A plan has sometimes been adopted of disfranchising places against which general corruption has been clearly proved. This seems a very rude and clumsy remedy; and it is objectionable further on the ground that the innocent are punished, both now and hereafter, with the guilty; and above all, that it is a remedy which never can be applied to the corruption exercised in large places. There were above two thousand persons proved to have been bribed in one Liverpool election. Did any one ever dream of disfranchising that large town? And yet no such extensive bribery was ever shown to have been carried on in any other place. It must always be borne in mind that the franchise is bestowed on a place, not as a favour or as a privilege to its inhabitants, but in order to obtain from it the contribution which is due towards the formation of a legislature for the whole country.

A very large extension of the franchise appears to promise the most effectual and the safest remedy. If there were no small places entitled to return members—if no place or district under five thousand voters were allowed representatives—there would be no such thing as bribery known, and one of the greatest mischiefs of popular government would be wholly and for ever removed.

CHAPTER X.

MODIFICATIONS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE PRINCIPLE—RESTRAINTS
UPON THE RIGHT OF VOTING.

Modifications limiting the Right of Voting—Combined Choice—Representative Qualification—England; Scotland—Inconsistency of English System—Error of extreme Reformers—Elective Qualification—Pretended grounds of this—Real grounds—French and English Qualification—English Criterion of Respectability the worst—Rule “Once a voter always a voter”—Exclusion of the best persons—Objection to Property Qualification—Immorality encouraged—Qualification a recent invention—History of Representation in this respect—Form of Government not affected by Qualification—Supposed advantages of Qualification—Good Representatives—Education Qualification—Check to Corruption—Extension of Suffrage and of Electoral Districts.

None of the expedients which we have been describing for modifying the principle of representation has any tendency to render that principle more impure, to impair its force, or to interfere with its use in supporting popular government. On the contrary, all but the Double Election tend to preserve, and purify, and improve it.

II. We are now to consider modifications of a very different nature, the object of which is to impair and, as it were, to adulterate the representative principle, rendering the political system less popular in which they are introduced.

1. We have examined the modification, which consists in giving to the greater portion of the people the power of selecting candidates. This modification belonged to the first class; but it would have belonged to the second class, if the choice of candidates had belonged to a select class of the community, or persons of a certain income, and the people at large could only choose out of the number so selected. In like manner, if the people by direct or by double election choose the eligible persons, and the executive government select from them, the modification belongs to the class which we are now considering, unless the people are enabled to choose absolutely the candidates, and can protect themselves by choosing only a single really eligible person for each vacancy.

2. Another modification by which the right is restricted is the requiring certain qualities to be possessed by the persons chosen as representatives. Sometimes a greater age has been required than that at which the law allows persons to manage their own affairs. In France, after the Restoration, no one could be returned to the Chamber of Deputies who was not forty years old. Sometimes the person elected was required to be of the class of electors. This was the law in Scotland before the year 1832. A property test or qualification, however, is the most common. In England, all but members for the universities and peers' eldest

sons must have 600*l.* a year clear in landed property to sit for counties, and 300*l.* to sit for boroughs; the eldest sons of persons qualified for county members being presumed to be themselves qualified. It must be obvious that nothing can be more absurd or more inconsistent with itself than this qualification; for while the constitution of parliament recognises the right of the towns, that is the trading classes, to be represented, it compels them to choose for their deputies men who have property in land. As well might it compel counties to choose men in trade for their representatives. A man may have a million in the funds, or as much capital invested in commerce, and he is unfit to represent a commercial town, unless he has also 300*l.* a year in real estate. This law, it is needless to say, has always been evaded. The member being only obliged to have his qualification at the two moments of his being elected and taking his seat, obtains a conveyance of property, which he, immediately after taking his seat re-conveys.

It must, however, be added that nothing can be more speculative or less practical than the great objection which some extreme reformers have taken to the representation qualification. They think it excludes men of the middle or inferior classes from parliament, and they therefore propose not only to abolish this qualification, but to pay the members for their services, as they were paid in ancient times. The only result of this would be a considerable increase of bribery. The payment might have some effect, though but little, if any, because the persons of that class would hardly ever choose to elect one of their own body, from the jealousy which always prevails of one another, and leads them to prefer their betters. But the removal of the qualification would have no such effect at all. What place, what body of men, would choose artisans or day-labourers to represent them, were the right of voting ever so general? And what artisan or small tradesman could afford to give up his calling and his livelihood, in order to manage the affairs of the country? That men in such circumstances would be more accessible to bribery as representatives than men of independent fortunes needs not be proved. It is self-evident. Their being eligible, therefore, and being in consequence elected, would be no advantage whatever to the community.

3. But the most important of all modifications in restraint of popular rights, is the affixing a certain qualification to the electors, and thus confining the right of choosing representatives to a certain class of the community. The origin of this is partly the pretended alarm about popular violence at elections, partly and chiefly the notion that the people at large cannot safely be trusted with a voice upon the public concerns. The former reason was put forth in the fifteenth century (8 Henry VI.) by our parliament when they wished to exclude the poorer freeholders from exercising

the franchise, the members for counties having before that time been chosen by the County Court, composed of all freeholders without exception, whereas the new statute confined the right to persons possessed of 40s. a year, equal to as many pounds at this day. The same alarm has also been constantly given as the reason for our courts of law leaning against general rights of voting in the choice of corporate officers in towns; and its operation had, previous to 1832, by degrees deprived all but a select few among the townfolk of the elective franchise. The Scotch parliament, in the fifteenth century (1469), by a single act confined the right of holding corporate offices to the existing magistrates, who were empowered to fill up all vacancies in their number; and these magistrates alone chose the members of parliament. The towns of the United Provinces, as we have seen, took a similar course a century and a half later; and it has been pretty generally pursued in other parts of the continent.

But the true and the operative reason for this important restriction is the belief that the people cannot be trusted. They who so think, and unfortunately they have always been a great majority of the persons possessing influence in the legislatures both of France and of England, have therefore devised a means of confining the right of voting to what they consider as the trustworthy portion of the people, those possessed of a certain amount of wealth and those possessed of certain corporate rights. The wealth, or the rights, are not so much the matter deemed to be essential as the respectability of the parties. The pecuniary circumstances are supposed to indicate a certain degree of station, and it is thought that persons of this station, having some stake in the country, but still more, having some information, some knowledge of affairs, and some integrity, will not abuse the right of choosing representatives.

In France the payment of a certain sum in direct taxes is the criterion of respectability. A considerable sum is now required. In the first constitution (1791) only the payment of three days' labour (about half-a-crown) was required for the electors in the Primary Assembly; but two hundred days, or about 12*l.*, for those of the Electoral Colleges. This criterion is not liable to many of the objections which lie against the English test; but it is objectionable, as making the rights of the constituent body depend upon the revenue laws, which may at any moment be so changed as to disfranchise or to enfranchise whole classes of the people.

It is needless to dwell upon the great inconsistency of the English plan, as exemplified in the line which is drawn to sever the voters from the community at large. Thus wealth is taken as a criterion of respectability, and yet a man with a million of funded property, or a million lent upon bond or mortgage, has no vote, while the renter of a hovel is qualified if he pays 10*l.* a-year to the owner. But the gross absurdity is the taking wealth as a criterion, and

affixing so small an amount as makes it no criterion at all, even considering wealth to be in certain amounts a true test. If it is to be taken as a criterion, the qualification should be raised, so as to indicate that there is wealth enough possessed to indicate respectability. The 10*l.* rent, or the 40*s.* freehold, really is as bungling a test as a standard of a recruit's fitness for the service would be, which should require that no one be enlisted under four feet high, with the view of providing that the soldiery should be strong enough to go through their duties. Another gross inconsistency of these qualifications is, that while we pretend only to take them as tests of respectability, we no sooner apply them than we forget this, and regard the property as something sought after for its own sake; else, why require such property to remain vested in the voter? If the possession of certain pecuniary means at any one time showed him to be of that class which may safely be entrusted with the elective franchise, does his loss of these pecuniary means degrade him to an inferior class, and make him who was trustworthy last year not to be trusted this? Are his industry, sobriety, information, judgment, all gone with his money? At least let us be consistent with ourselves, and admit that, having once been proved to be a fit person, he should be recognized as such ever after. The rule to have any colour of consistency with itself should be—"Once a voter always a voter."

But it seems, if possible, more absurd to adopt such a test, or any test at all, unless there is an absolute impossibility of obtaining the quality itself directly, or at least by much easier methods. If the possession of wealth is allowed to be a criterion of sense and information, all must admit it to be liable to error, as the most silly and ignorant of men may have it. So, if it be taken as an evidence of industrious and sober habits, or of general respectability, the same uncertainty must be allowed to attend it. But education actually received, is a direct proof that the thing in question belongs to the individual. So attending regularly an institution for mental improvement is incompatible with ignorance, and with an idle, dissipated life. But we reject these qualifications altogether; just as if a chemist were in search of gold to take aqua regia, in which peradventure it might be dissolved, or peradventure it might not, and pass over a piece of the virgin metal itself or the grains of gold dust.

The exclusion which our test effects of some most meritorious and valuable members of society is a grievous evil, and affords a very strong objection to it. All lodgers and boarders, all who have no house of their own, are excluded from the borough representation. The most ingenious artisans; the men whose expertness and industry are the props of our commercial greatness; almost all who have carried the arts to so great perfection as rivals the finest performances of any age or country; the whole body of our mercantile

navy, of those whose lives are spent in driving our vast commerce, braving all dangers by their firmness, and overcoming all difficulties by their matchless skill ; most of our literary and scientific men, of those whose unwearied labours illustrate their country and adorn their age, and elevate their race—all are disfranchised by a law formed for the avowed purpose of drawing the line between ignorance and intelligence. No doubt it does draw the line, and it leaves information on the excluded coast.

But there is a very serious objection to any qualification which depends on property alone. If, as has been already stated, it is low, no test is afforded of respectability ; and if it is too high, vast numbers are excluded. In truth, the low qualification which admits the greater number, is wholly objectionable on the principle upon which alone all such tests rest, and it either should be much higher, when it would create an oligarchy—or it should be much lower, when it would cease to be a qualification at all either for good or for evil. The mischief of a low qualification is not to be denied or got over. It creates a set of men in every place, limited in number, who have the sole possession of the elective right, and who are thus set up as marks singled out for the arts of the dealer in corruption. There seems no reason to expect that any legislative measure or any judicial severity will ever apply an effectual cure to this crying evil. As long as the place of representative is an object of all men's ambition, many wealthy persons will seek it by means of bribery ; and their zealous friends will bribe where themselves might be disposed to refuse an honour so purchased. As long as the means of corruption are possessed, and are thus applied, small constituencies will be the victims of the temptations afforded ; and the only real remedy is greatly extending the number of voters, or if that is impossible, greatly increasing the size of the electoral districts into which the country is divided. If we retain a superstitious veneration for the names of those districts ; if we cannot bear to see a new division of the kingdom for political purposes ; if our old local associations are too powerful to suffer the outrage of such changes—it is all very well, and we gratify our romantic feelings ; but then, let us not shut our eyes to the price which we pay for this sentimental indulgence ; it is the perpetuation of the most corrupt practices by which a free people can be debased and degraded ; and the spreading of an immorality so glaring, that the lovers of liberty itself are fain to doubt whether popular government may not really be bought too dear at such a cost as the sacrifice of public virtue.

It deserves to be further considered by those who are so friendly to exclusion, and so desirous of "walking in the old paths," that qualifications are an invention of after times, having had no place in the original constitution of this country, or indeed of any country which early in the feudal history adopted the system of general assemblies. The barons, great and small, were originally sum-

moned to the council, colloquium, or Parliament, without any distinction. Afterwards the townsfolk were called upon to appear, sometimes at first in person, as in France upon several occasions; generally on the continent, and always in England, to send representatives. The lesser barons, in this country and afterwards in Scotland, were called to send deputies instead of attending personally. That those freeholders both in England and Scotland all originally voted without any exclusive test whatever, we have the most positive evidence. But there is every reason to believe, that originally the townsfolk also voted without any exception. This appears certain, because there is no record in our history of any one law restraining the franchise and fixing a qualification. No one was, indeed, anxious in those times to be elected; and that which it was reckoned a burthen to receive, it could not be deemed an advantage to bestow. But in hardly any case has the older or common law drawn distinctions and affixed proportions or sums. It would be hard to name any other instance than dower, which was taken from the civil law and founded upon a natural and rational partition of the property into three parts, of which the children should have one, and the deceased's nominees another. The most ancient constitution of this and other countries, therefore, was wholly unacquainted with the doctrine of qualifications.

But this would be nothing like a decisive reason against them, were there material benefit to be derived from their introduction into any given constitution. It may at first be thought evident that this must depend on the kind of constitution into which it is proposed to introduce them. A little more attention, however, to the subject will satisfy us that it is not so, and that the arguments for and against them are the same, of whatever form of government it is proposed to make them a part. The Representative principle can never in any scheme of polity have an object other than admitting the people to a share in the government. The share may be greater, or it may be less; and its amount will depend wholly on the power which, through their representatives, they are permitted to exercise. But it will not at all depend upon the manner in which those representatives are chosen, or the proportion of the people allowed to choose them. We may suppose a case in which the representatives of the people should have hardly any real influence. If the patrician body or the sovereign had the sole right of originating all measures, or if the power of the purse were taken from the popular assembly, or if a majority of the three estates, the patricians and the sovereign, for example, could legislate for the whole, it is plain that the government would only in name be popular, and it would be as little popular if every man of twenty-one chose the representative as if only men having a hundred a-year, or paying ten pounds a-year in direct taxes, had the elective franchise. In like manner it would be a popular government if the representatives alone

could originate measures, or if the sovereign and the popular assembly could legislate for the whole; and it would be popular whether all the inhabitants, or only a certain proportion, were the electors of that assembly. If indeed the qualification were so high as to throw the choice into the hands of a very small number of the richer and nobler classes, if, as was the case in England before 1832, a majority of the Commons were returned by the patricians, or by those under their immediate control, the government would become aristocratical, but this would not be in consequence of the qualification, properly speaking; it would be in consequence of the people being wholly excluded, and their representatives being chosen for them by the aristocracy, and not by themselves. It is not a Representative Government at all in which such a choice is made. The aristocracy choosing deputies does not constitute a Representative Government. If the British House of Commons were abolished, the government could in no just sense be called Representative, merely because the Irish and Scotch Peerage were represented by deputies of their own choice. We have seen that the popular choice is an essential condition. We mean by a Representative Government one in which the body of the people, either in whole, or in a considerable proportion of the whole, elect their deputies to a chamber of their own. But there are degrees in this. Although, therefore, the qualification in the sense in which we are now taking it would not alter the frame of the constitution according as it was pitched higher or lower, it might make that constitution more or less popular in a considerable degree, and increase or diminish the influence of the patrician order, and to a certain degree of the sovereign, according to that scale. If the common people were wholly excluded from voting, it would be easier for the influence of patronage, wealth, rank, to exert itself in elections, and the two other estates would thus obtain some kind of influence over the deliberations of the popular assembly. It is equally evident that this ought never to be permitted beyond the narrowest limits, that is to say, the weight which wealth, rank, and power always must possess in every community. To restrict the right of voting for the purpose of augmenting this weight is wholly contrary to the spirit of a mixed government, because that government assigns to each order its own place; and if the patrician body are firm of purpose, they have quite sufficient protection for their privileges in the direct power which they possess of rejecting any measures proposed by the other bodies, and of proposing any measure of their own. If each of the three estates, or of the two, supposing only that number of estates, possess not a veto on all measures, the government is only in name mixed. In that case the amount of the qualification either becomes indifferent, when the government is in reality aristocratic, or it ought to be extremely low, perhaps not to exist at all, when the government is in reality democratic, though it would still

be democratic though the qualification should be very considerable.

What then is the advantage of a legitimate kind sought for in a qualification,—and honestly sought for,—not for the purpose of individually aiding the schemes of the other orders, but of fairly working out the principle of the government? It is confined to these two particulars, the securing a better choice of representatives, and the preventing corruption. The former consideration depends upon our distrust of the intelligence of the people at large; the latter upon our distrust of their virtue; and both upon our distrust of the influence which the more intelligent, more virtuous classes can exercise over the inferior members of society. As for the pretence that confusion or riot or any kind of disorder, or even the least inconvenience could result from the utmost extension of the franchise, no one can now affect to be influenced by it. The Representative principle at once precludes the possibility of any such mischief, because it enables us to subdivide the voters in any degree required by the convenience of the public. Let us therefore consider the only real advantages ascribed to the qualification, a good choice of representatives, and a check to corruption.

1. Some reasoners have assumed that if all the people were to elect, the classes who are without any property, being the most numerous, would overpower the proprietary classes, and return representatives who would interfere with the rights of property, throw all public burthens upon its owners, perhaps decree its confiscation and division. This assumes first a grosser degree of ignorance and thoughtlessness than can well be supposed in the people of any civilised community, who must know that the only security of society, and the best security for the labourers themselves, arises from the security of proprietary rights. But it also assumes that there is to be a union of the working classes all over the country in order to return this majority. Then if they are likely to combine for the purpose of indirectly effecting the confiscation of property, why do they not now combine for the purpose of seizing upon it directly? For assuredly they possess this power in every country, and yet in none is there any more alarm felt respecting such a measure, than there is an apprehension of the horses in the country combining to kick, or the oxen to gore men to death.—Again the argument assumes that the other orders of the state are to remain passive spectators of the measures of spoliation, and neither to exert themselves before they are adopted, nor to reject them afterwards when they are presented for their acceptance.—Lastly, the argument assumes that wealth, rank, talents, learning, virtue, are to have no influence whatever in determining the choice of the common people, who are supposed to be so inferior in all these qualities, and who assuredly are so in some of them; whereas many persons have fears of a totally different kind, and dread their being too much under the sway of superiors. I well remember, when I said to the late Duke of

Bedford that his zeal for Parliamentary Reform was all the more creditable to him because it was so disinterested, he having then four close seats and two others which were almost secure ; "Not so very disinterested," was his reply ; "for I doubt not I should influence the return of a considerably greater number of members if the suffrage was universal"—which, however, he did not altogether approve. The truth is that the alarms of those who expect a new set of men to be chosen were the whole people instead of a sixth part of them, as at present, represented in Parliament, are founded upon a profound ignorance of human nature, and of the relations in which men stand to each other in every social system.

At the same time it must be admitted that some restriction of the franchise would be most desirable, in order to diminish the influence of profligate adventurers, mere traders in politics, and to lessen the risk of popular clamour carrying bad and obstructing good measures. The test of a good education is the best by far, nor does it seem of difficult application. My Education Bills of 1838 and 1839 introduced this as a qualification for voting in parish school meetings ; and I then declared it to be one advantage of its adoption for this purpose that it might so easily and so safely be extended to the Parliamentary franchise.

2. That the extension of the franchise tends to the increase of bribery, cannot be denied. Nor is there any answer to this great difficulty except what is to be found from considering that, if the qualification must be raised for this reason, we have no alternative but raising it so high as to exclude nine in ten of the present race of voters both in England and in France. But it is most important to observe that the extension of the franchise brings along with it the great and effectual remedy for all corruption, If the universal admission of the people to choose their representatives is accompanied with the abolition of all constituencies under five or six thousand voters, the most effectual check will be afforded to all corrupt practices. Is it indeed true that the number of the voters is the real cure, and not the mere extension of the franchise, because a numerous body of a higher description would be the less accessible to bribery. But the division of the country into larger electoral districts, that is, into larger bodies of voters, is greatly facilitated by admitting all classes to vote, and this should be an inducement to confer upon the people the benefits which such an extension in other respects is calculated to secure.

CHAPTER XI.

CANONS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

Freedom of the Representative—Non-interference of the People—Overawing the Representative criminal—Representation should be direct—Choice not to be combined—No Representative Qualification—Distribution of Representation by importance of Classes—Numbers alone an insufficient criterion—Great disproportion to population improper—Electoral districts to be large—Elective franchise extended to all educated persons—Secret votes inexpedient, except for tradesmen.

From the inquiries in which we have been engaged within the compass of the five last chapters certain general principles may be deduced as governing the theory of representation; and it may be convenient here to state these, as the Canons which may be said to rule the system.

I. The deputy chosen represents the people of the whole community, exercises his own judgment upon all measures, receives freely the communications of his constituents, is not bound by their instructions, though liable to be dismissed by not being re-elected, in case the difference of opinion between him and them is irreconcilable and important.

II. The people's power being transferred to the representative body for a limited time, the people are bound not to exercise their influence so as to control the conduct of their representatives, as a body, on the several measures that come before them.

III. Any proceedings on the part of the people tending to overawe or unduly to influence their representatives upon any given question, though no outrage should be committed, and only an exhibition of numerical force be displayed for these purposes, are contrary to the whole nature of representative government, and in themselves revolutionary, being criminal in the people and doubly criminal in any of their representatives, who thereby commit a flagrant breach of duty.

IV. The best sort of representation is the direct, in which the deputies are chosen by the people, and not by electors whom the people choose.

V. The combination of any other choice or veto with the popular choice is greatly to be reprobated, as an impairing of the pure representative principle; so the representative body itself should have no power of expelling its members except for infamous offences, or the non-payment of lawful debts.

VI. The selection of representatives ought to be free, and the whole community open to the choice of the electors, without any restriction whatever upon eligibility except the period of infancy, or conviction of infamous offences, or actual insolvency declared by judicial sentence.

VII. The distribution of the representation should be such as to secure representatives of all the great classes in the community, which are sufficiently numerous in the combined ratio of the importance of the classes and the numbers comprised in them.

VIII. Population alone cannot safely be taken as the criterion of numbers chosen to represent, and any arrangement is to be reprobated which should give one very large town the choice of too many representatives, by giving it representatives numerous in proportion to its population.

IX. Population should not be so far neglected as to give great inequality to the electoral districts, thus enabling a small body of the people, by their representatives, to control those of a much larger body.

X. Districts should be formed for representation so large as to prevent the corruption of the voters, by the candidates or their friends.

XI. The choice of representatives should be entrusted to all persons of full age, unconvicted of infamous offences, who have received a good plain education; and if a property qualification is adopted, no change or loss of property ought to disfranchise a person once recognised as fit to exercise the right.

XII. The manner of voting should be such as to protect the voter's independence; but the secret vote would in most cases have little influence, and chiefly in the case of tradesmen, while it is liable to grave objections, and is a positive evil if the suffrage be not nearly universal.

CHAPTER XII.

APPLICATION OF THE REPRESENTATIVE PRINCIPLE—FOUNDATIONS OF MIXED GOVERNMENT.

Universality of the Canons—Risk of popular interference—Its limits—Aristocratic interference through the people—Interference with Elections—Restriction of Franchise does not affect Democracy—Illustrations from the English Commonwealth; the Dutch; the French—Illustrations from Authors; Harrington; Sidney; Milton—Influence of the other Estates over Popular Representatives—King's friends in England—This influence now more difficult—Direct interference of the other Estates criminal—True theory of the Constitution—Securities of the other orders against popular Usurpation—Unwillingness to go to extremities—Defensive Physical Force—Resources of the Sovereign and Aristocracy—Resistance necessarily the foundation of Mixed Government—Mutual right of resistance—Its limits—True use of the doctrine—Objections answered.

The principles which have been laid down respecting representation and the observations made respecting its operation on the civil policy of states, are of universal application. They are not confined to one form of government, but extend to every kind of constitution into which the representative system can be introduced. It is however manifest that only two forms of government are com-

patible with this system, Democracy and Mixed Government. If it be introduced either into a pure aristocracy, or a pure monarchy, the constitution must of necessity undergo a great change from the admixture thus effected by the partial addition of the popular scheme of polity.

1. In a democracy the representative principle has both the freest scope, and is the least exposed to danger of either being impaired or destroyed. The most serious risk to which it is exposed arises from the impatience of the people, and their disposition to take back a portion of the power which they have entrusted to their deputies, by controlling them in its exercise on questions of a peculiarly interesting nature, contrary to the second of the Canons given in the last chapter. The peculiar importance of any measure, either of general legislation or of administrative policy, affords no excuse for this interference ; because each successive occasion will never fail to assume a character of extraordinary importance as the present always does with the bulk of mankind, who habitually fall into the error common to our moral and our natural optics, of mistaking near objects for great ones. That no occasion will ever arise where in a democracy, as in a mixed Government, the gross misconduct of the representative body will justify popular interposition, cannot be affirmed. But these occasions are extremely rare, and they are of a revolutionary nature ; they are occasions that justify resistance to the established government. In a democracy it may safely be asserted that no occasion will justify the people acting for themselves, and in defiance of their representatives, that would not justify resistance to the sovereign in a monarchy. The cases are precisely similar, and rest on the same principles.

2. The representative system is exposed to another risk from the efforts of powerful individuals and parties to render the government less democratic, and substitute an aristocratic influence for the unmixed dominion of the people. These attempts are almost certain to take one direction, the interference with the representative functions, and introducing popular control. As long as the system remains entire, and the deputies exercise the powers of government, their selection by the people, their responsibility to their constituents, and the powers possessed by the representative body, remove all chance of any faction succeeding in changing the government. But it is otherwise if the supreme power, or any portion of it, be resumed by the people. Then the arts of intriguers and the corruption to which they resort, make the chances of success far greater. It is also very natural to consider that the representative system supposes in a pure democracy a large extent of territory, else the people would most probably have retained the government in their own hands. Hence popular interference means not the interference of the whole people, nor even of the majority,

but the excitement and agitation of some two or three great towns, which may be worked upon by the arts of crafty men; and thus hold out a prospect of enabling an aristocracy, or an oligarchy, to obtain the preponderating influence in the state. Therefore such designs are always sure to be directed towards the resumption of power by the people, and the impairing, perhaps the final destruction, of the representative system.

3. The third danger to which the principle is exposed in a democracy is the interference of parties of powerful individuals with the exercise of the right of election. By means of factious arts and delusions, and by corrupt practices, the choice of the representatives may be so influenced as to weaken the hold of popular principles over them, and thus to prepare the way for a change in the government after infringing the purity of the representative system. As, however, this course cannot be effectually pursued in a state where there are no privileged orders, from the difficulty of obtaining the consent of the bulk of the people to their own degradation, and from the watchful jealousy which they usually show of all interference with their choice of deputies, though they are far from being as constantly on their guard on the subject of measures which they often scantily comprehend, we may assume that this is by no means an imminent hazard, to which in a democratic commonwealth the representative principle stands exposed.

It may here be observed that the restriction of representation, by excluding large classes of the people from the elective franchise, by no means renders the government other than democratic. We should be guilty of an abuse of ordinary language were we to term such a constitution aristocratic, or oligarchical, or mixed. If we look indeed to the great authorities on these subjects we shall find them all treating a government as republican, by which they usually mean democratic, provided any considerable portion of the people exercise by their delegates the supreme power. Thus the Commonwealth men of the 17th century, like the old Romans, never were very nice in weighing how large a proportion of the people influenced the government, or how long their delegates retained the trust in their own hands, and with how little reference to the wishes of the nation at large they exercised their powers, provided the supreme power was in the hands of many, and not of a single chief. The Long Parliament was elected by the decayed burghs, as well as the great towns and counties. Almost all the negotiations with Charles I. were confined to the powers which the parliament should possess, and turned not upon the mode of its election. The Independents, when they obtained the chief sway in the House, framed a plan of government which only dealt with the parliament's prerogative; and it was not till 1654, under the Protector's constitution, that the decayed burghs were disfranchised, and their members given to the

counties.¹—So too the Dutch republicans deemed their government a commonwealth long after the principle of self-election had been introduced into their cities, provided the Stadtholder's prerogative was kept subordinate to the authority of the States.—In like manner the republicans of France were much more anxious about preventing a return of the royal family, and a revival of the patrician order, than about the extension of the right of election to the whole body of the citizens. The constitutions which in those countries were formed to the exclusion of large classes from all direct influence on the government, were all Democracies, though not of a pure and simple kind.

As for reasoners upon purely speculative grounds, they appear to have been equally indifferent to the question, except only that some, as Harrington, in sketching the outline of an imaginary commonwealth, have given extensive rights of election.² In all the discourse of Algernon Sidney upon Government we see constant indications of a rooted dislike to monarchy and ardent love of Democracy; but not a sentence can we find that shows the illustrious author to have regarded the manner in which the people were represented as of any importance; while Milton so entirely summed up his Democratic opinions in the "refusal of one man and the having no House of Lords," that he was intoxicated with joy at the revival of the Long Parliament after Richard Cromwell's deposition, and strenuously contended for the people's representatives being chosen for life.³ Both those great men might well take for their motto the lines so appropriately quoted by one of them as describing his faith—

*"Manus hæc inimica tyrannis
Monte petit placidam sub libertate quietem."*

It would be difficult to find a more remarkable illustration of the progress which political philosophy has made since those days, than the disregard of the representative system, in all but its name and outward appearance, by the most illustrious friends of popular government, in the age when the freedom of England was, after a long struggle in the senate and in the field, finally won.

In a Mixed government, whether aristocratical or monarchical the consideration of most importance which offers itself respecting the representative system is its tendency to derange the balance of the constitution and convert it into a democracy more or less pure. This arises from the power of the people being called forth and concentrated by their representatives; and from the undeniable

¹ This had been proposed August, 1648, by the Council of Officers. In Cromwell's "Instrument of Government," the universal qualification was the possession of 200*l.* (equal to 500*l.* now) of any kind of property.

² He gives it to every man of thirty years old. But his Commonwealth has also a law against the acquisition of unequal property, and for the rotation of offices. — (*Oceana*, 101.)

³ *Prose Works*, p. 441 et seq.

fact, that when freely used against the privileges of the other orders in the state, these are exposed to a great risk of being overpowered. Hence, for their own defence, the sovereign or the patrician body, or in a government like ours both the one and the other, have always endeavoured to obtain an indirect influence beyond their peculiar privileges, by gaining some hold over the popular representatives in order to avoid the consequences of a collision, which might ensue in case they were driven to use their direct influence over the course of the government. The efforts of which I am now speaking are those made to bias the choice of the electors and occasion the nomination of persons who, being connected with themselves, are sure to favour their interests and views rather than those of their constituents. For there is another source of influence much less direct than this, which is perfectly legitimate and founded in the nature of things. To exemplify the distinction between these two kinds of influence, it may be observed, that the possession in this country of close or nomination boroughs by the government, or by the peers, before the year 1832, gave the sovereign and the aristocracy a direct sway over the assembly in which the constitution required that only the representatives of the people should sit, and only the people should rule; while the wealth, rank, talents, and virtues of the patrician body (the Natural Aristocracy) gave that body, and the respect for the crown gave the sovereign, an indirect influence, besides, which the change of 1832 has not been able to affect.

There are various ways in which the two other estates may directly obtain weight and even control in the popular body. They may interfere in elections by the use of corrupt means to bribe or to intimidate the electors; and they may exert their influence without any corruption, by using their authority, their natural weight with the people, in favour of certain persons devoted to them and to their body. They may also use their influence with the representatives themselves after their election. It is not impossible, though not very common, for several peers to have their agents in our House of Commons: I hardly remember a parliament in which there were not some few instances of this connexion. The sovereign must, also, have many members in his service, unless, as in France, the ministers are excluded from votes; but even there they are suffered to have seats and to speak in both the Chambers. When the sovereign, as has frequently happened both here and in France, is obliged to take into his councils a ministry of whose persons or principles he disapproves, he has generally had a trusty band of "king's friends"—men for the most part attached to his service, by holding military or household places, and who act neither as representatives of the people who elect them, nor as supporters of the actual government, but on behalf of the royal person and authority. It is, however, incomparably more difficult now to influence the

representatives in the English parliament than it formerly was; and therefore the attempts of the other two orders, or estates, must be chiefly made to influence the elections. Nor are these attempts as easy as they formerly were, because the conduct of the representatives is now more under the control of the constituents.

This interference of the crown and of the aristocracy is quite contrary to the genius of the representative system, and is a violation of any mixed constitution into which that system enters as a component part. It is all the worse for not being reciprocal. The people have no means of influencing the proceedings either of the aristocracy or of the sovereign, other than through the choice of representatives whose powers are conferred on them by the constitution. If ever the people endeavour to use their peculiar power, the force of numbers, to overawe the deliberations of the aristocratic assembly, or the councils of the sovereign, there is an illegal act done for which punishment ought to be exacted. If the monarch or the patricians exert their influence to corrupt or intimidate the constituents, or to seduce the representatives from their duty to their constituents, there is an illegal and a punishable act also committed. There is even an irregular, unconstitutional, and reprehensible act done, though it may not be punishable unless as a breach of the privileges of the popular body, if any of the other two estates interferes in any other manner, any manner not strictly speaking illegal, to influence the choice of the representative, or his conduct when chosen. The true theory of the mixed government is, that each of the orders or estates should remain separate from the other, and each possess, independent of the other, its own peculiar powers and privileges.

But there is nothing reprehensible or contrary to the spirit of the system in the other orders gaining influence over the representative body, either indirectly through the electors or directly with the deputies, by means of the Natural Aristocracy and of the reverence for the sovereign. This must ever give those estates a very great weight in that body; and to this must be added, the regard for the stability of the mixed constitution, and, consequently, for the continuance and security of the other orders, as well as their own, which largely influences the people and their deputies. They regard the patricians and the sovereign not as enemies to be attacked, or as adversaries to be struggled against, but as partners in the same concern, with whose co-operation the good of the whole community is to be sought and worked out.

However, the great security and influence of the patrician and royal estates, and their best protection against the third estate, should the exercise of its power be apprehended as overwhelming, is to be found in the legal rights, and privileges, and prerogatives of these other estates. It is of the essence of a mixed government that

each estate should have powers independent of all the others, and in the exercise of which it is unaccountable and supreme. But if each estate is not also possessed of some effectual strength, some actual force, wherewith to vindicate its authority when assailed, or enforce its rights when disputed, the government is only in name mixed, and the impotent estate being reduced to a cypher is as if it had no existence. Now there are two kinds of protection for the authority of the estates which possess less strength, less physical force, than the popular body. The one is the reluctance of that body, and especially of its representatives, to bring on a crisis dangerous to the existence of the government, the desire which all the estates must have in common to avoid extremities, in order to consult the general interest. Of this we have already treated fully in examining the doctrine of checks and balances, as well as in other portions of this work.

The other protection is that which must only be resorted to in cases of extreme necessity, but the means of resorting to which must always be possessed, and the possibility of the resort never be lost sight of—the exertion of physical force. Nor must this be reckoned a desperate chance. The Sovereign has, of course, always the power of protecting his prerogative in such extremities, by using the force which the constitution entrusts to him, calling upon the civil functionaries to abide by him, and appealing to the military power for his defence. The Aristocracy are far more helpless; but even they are by no means without defence. They form a small body themselves with their families; but they are a body of the greatest courage and fortitude, making an important nucleus or central point round which all may rally who hate injustice and would resist oppression, as well the oppression and injustice of the many as of one—of the people as of the prince. The retainers of the Patrician body must always be very numerous, and they are in general exceedingly attached to their patrons. A large, and well-armed, and high-spirited force could always be raised by this class in their defence were matters urged to a crisis by the encroachments and usurpations of the people. Besides, in a mixed government where there are three estates, the Sovereign would infallibly take part with the privileged orders. It must further be observed that a very considerable portion of the people themselves would prefer this, the side of law and justice, to joining in the excesses of popular usurpation. All men of property must be averse to such a revolution as could only be brought about by the overpowering force of the multitude possessed of no property at all; and it is manifest that the proprietors of all classes form a very numerous body in every civilized community. Take in England only the owners of stock; there are ascertained to be above half a million of these, and they must almost all be averse to popular revolution. They and their connections would make a very

numerous body to rally round the existing order of things, in the event of any attempt to overthrow it by lawless force.

It is needless to repeat that the case here put is an extreme one: the insurrection of the people, by themselves or their representatives, against the established constitution—their attempting by the power of their numbers to overthrow the lawful and undoubted privileges of the other orders in the state. The case is one of a revolutionary kind; the act is, like that of resistance on the part of the subject, only to be justified by the necessity which leaves no alternative. The right of resistance is the foundation, and it is of necessity the foundation, of all popular, all mixed government. The encroachments of the Sovereign upon the rights of the subject, his ruling in defiance of the law, and trampling upon the liberties which the constitution secures to the people, is a full justification of resistance to his authority. The encroachments of the People upon the rights of the Sovereign, their seeking to destroy his lawful authority, and trample upon the prerogative recognized by the constitution for the good of all, is a full justification of his using force in defence of his authority. As the People cannot resist by the forms of the law, because the Sovereign is supposed to set it at defiance, so he cannot constrain the People by these forms when their proceedings are altogether lawless. As it is not every encroachment of the Sovereign that will justify resistance, but, on the contrary, the evils of the struggle are always to be set against the advantage of restraining the wrong-doer—so it is not every Popular encroachment that will make it lawful for the Sovereign to use the force with which he is entrusted in order to put down lawless proceedings. The evils must in both cases have become intolerable before the resistance is to be attempted, and the probability of success is to be weighed in order that a hopeless attempt may not involve the community in distress and confusion. Above all, in either case, the parties whose rights are invaded must first exhaust every peaceful, and orderly, and lawful means of obtaining redress, and must never think of arms until laws have failed to protect them.

The most important application of this principle, as the most beneficial use of resistance, is its tendency to prevent one power in the state from encroaching and usurping upon the others. When the monarch is aware that his infraction of the laws, and his use against the constitution of the force which is committed to him for its support, will be the resistance of the people in its defence, he is deterred from harbouring unlawful wishes, or from embodying them in treasonable designs. When the people are aware that their force, if used to subvert the established government, would be divided against itself, and that they would encounter a vigorous opposition from the other orders, they are not likely to follow leaders who would betray them to their ruin.

But it may be said that the view here taken of the right of resistance when the people are resolved to change the form of their government is contrary to the undoubted maxims that all government is for the people's good, and that the people have a right to change it if they please. To this the answer is at hand. The people have that right; but it is of a revolutionary nature, and assumes society to be resolved into its elements. As long as a certain form of government is established, the presumption is that the good of the whole, and especially of the people, is best consulted by its maintenance, and requires it to be supported. The different orders in the state can have no other rule to guide them. All must act as if their duty to the community bound each to maintain its own rights and privileges. All must assume that the existing order of things is right; and until overpowering necessity compels their submission, all must resist encroachment and change.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXERCISE OF POPULAR POWER.

Mode of the People exercising power does not affect the Democratic form—Delegation of Executive Functions—Of Judicial Functions—Limits of the proposition—Judicial Usurpations; Israel; Carthage; Sardinia—Judicial Functions at Rome; Athens—Mode of exercising Popular Power—Necessity of preventing rashness and violence—Evils of numerous assemblies—Mob proceedings—Three Checks on rash decisions—These do not lessen Popular Power—Delay; Notices; Stages—Discussion by several bodies—Long period of delegation—Objectionable checks—Initiative—Fixed majority—Prohibition of Repeal—Examples—Penalties on Innovation—Athenian Checks of the right kind—Of the wrong kind—American Checks of both kinds—These Checks always existing without positive law—Orders of proceeding; Experience of business; Contention of different classes.

The manner in which the people may exercise their power is not material to the existence of a Democracy, provided that power, undivided, is either retained in their own hands, or only parted with to persons of their own choice, and for so short a time as to keep the delegates accountable and answerable to their constituents. We have seen that a representative body being appointed to exercise the trust does not render the government the less Democratic.

1. So neither does the delegation of executive functions to one or more persons, or to a council, render the government the less Democratic. In fact some delegation of this sort is matter of necessity, because no popular assembly ever can perform all the executive functions of any government. The Athenian assemblies approached as near this inconvenient state of things as it is possible to conceive, because particular measures, as well as the appointment of commanders and other office-bearers, were discussed and decided in those meetings. Yet even at Athens there were magistrates entrusted

ed with executive functions. So in the mixed or aristocratic Commonwealth of Rome there were various branches of administration conducted by the senate and the comitia, such as the adoption of particular measures, and the nomination of particular office-bearers, civil and military. Yet there were many magistrates in whom individually resided the power of executing the laws.

2. *Secondly*, the administration of justice in a Democracy may be wholly parted with by the people to magistrates; and, provided these are of their choice, the Democratic principle is not infringed upon, even if, as is most essential to the due administration of justice, the judicial office should, to secure its perfect independence, be conferred for life. But here we must, of course, be understood as speaking of modern times, when a portion of the judicial duties is left in the hands of the people, by the institution of juries, or of those ancient states in which occasional judges partaking of the administration of justice with the permanent and official judges, all the qualities of a jury belonged to this mixed tribunal as far as regards the Democratic principle. If, indeed, there were neither the ancient nor the modern jurors in those tribunals, and that judges were appointed for life, unless an appeal should be given in all matters, as well of fact as of law, to the popular body or the legislature, it is evident that a power would be created in the state wholly incompatible with Democratic government—a power of the most effective kind, and which would in a very short time subvert the constitution. Indeed we find judges to have been in early times among the persons who, by usurpation, were enabled, from possessing the great powers of the judicial office, and clothing themselves with the respect naturally its property, to obtain sovereign authority and rule as monarchs over the people who originally had chosen them. It was so in Israel for many ages; and although some dispute prevails as to the duration of the power of the judges—one holding it to have been two hundred and ninety-nine years, another, from St. Paul's authority, four hundred and fifty—and although there is some uncertainty as to their appointment, it cannot be doubted that their original functions were judicial, and that their sovereign authority, held for life, though without inheritance, was usurped from the influence thus acquired.—The *Suffetes* at Carthage, in all probability, derived their authority from a similar usurpation; for the name is certainly Tyrian, like the colony which founded that famous commonwealth; and it must be the same with the Hebrew *Shophet*, judge, the *s* being used by the Latins, who had no such sound as *sh* in their language.—Again, we have seen that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the island of Sardinia was governed by four sovereigns, originally judges, who had usurped regal authority. In the ancient republics many of the judicial functions were exercised by the popular assemblies. We have seen how this policy in Athens gave jurisdiction to the largest bodies of the people; and even at Rome, though the judicial system was far less

imperfect, the legislative and judicial functions never were kept sufficiently distinct.

3. But it is not only in the delegation of powers sometimes better exercised, sometimes only possible to be exercised by individuals or by very small bodies, that the authority of the people in a Democracy may be directed, and to a certain degree restrained in its exercise without impairing the Democratic principle or making the government mixed. The legislative power itself may be exercised under various restraints, and in a manner effectually to impose laws upon the sovereign people without any real alteration of the Democracy. This subject is of great importance, and the right understanding of it precludes a variety of errors which have been committed by the enemies of popular government. It therefore requires an attentive consideration.

As we have repeatedly observed, the possessors of the supreme power in any constitution do not really restrain that power or alter the nature of that constitution by adopting a peculiar mode of exercising the permanent authority. Thus the sovereign in an absolute monarchy retains the undivided and uncontrolled power, although he may please to exercise it through councils, provided these are appointed by him, have no authority beyond that which he entrusts to them, and are at his pleasure displaced. The monarchy may even, as we have seen, be made the more pure and absolute by such arrangements of its functions. So the people in a Democracy may exercise their legislative power under such limitations as not only shall avoid any introduction of a mixed government, any risk of destroying the Democratic character of the constitution, but may render that character more stable, and keep it equally pure as if each act of state were done by the assembled people. Care must only be taken to introduce no permanent authority independent of the people, no power restraining the legislative authority, and placed beyond the popular control.

It is of the greatest possible importance that the proceedings of the people in making the laws which are to govern them, and deciding in the last resort upon the important questions which arise regarding the administration of their affairs, should be conducted in such a manner as to prevent the errors and miscarriages which arise from haste and inadvertence, from ignorance, and from the influence of heated passions. If a single deliberation, and the resolution formed upon it, were to decide every important matter, any assembly, but more especially any numerous assembly, thus conducting the affairs of a community would inevitably work its ruin in a very short time. This must happen as long as men are fallible, and have not the gift of perfect circumspection and fore-knowledge. Their only security lies in supplying that want by slowness of decision, by repeated consideration, by giving every opportunity to objectors, and taking all the chances which delay affords for further

lights and more mature reflexion. So it is with any council, however composed ; but a numerous body is sure to be composed of more ignorant and incapable than well informed and wise individuals. A single, sudden resolution will therefore be the determination of the less capable and worst informed ; the influence of the better class requiring time in order to produce its effects. With time that class generally will be found to prevail, especially in a body whom we are supposing to have no sinister views, but to be deciding upon its own most important interests. But there is another reason why this slowness to decide must ever be more essential in the case of a popular body, and the more essential in proportion as the body is numerous. The passions are easily excited in large assemblages of the people. A sudden alarm produces a universal panic, which sets all reason at defiance ; a false statement, if the charge be calculated to arouse indignation against either a man or a measure, is too readily believed, man's nature being unfortunately not prone to require stronger proof the worse the accusation is, but to let their abhorrence of the supposed matter open their ears to the tale ; sanguine hopes may be built on foundations as shadowy as those on which fears are raised ; the emotions of pity may be excited by a pathetic representation in favour of the worst of criminals ; the feelings of affection may be roused on behalf of the most despicable impostors ; in short there is no delusion into which a multitude may not be led by the efforts of eloquence, or the yet greater powers of falsehood. Hence, the errors of a mob, and its violence, its headstrong impatience, its deafness to reason, its proneness to cruelty, are proverbial in all countries and in every stage of society. It is certain that the more men are educated, and the greater experience in self-government they have gained, the less they are exposed to run risk of errors and of crimes ; yet there is something in the nature of great assemblies that forbids us ever to expect they should be otherwise than liable to the misleading influence of strong emotions. It is even possible that some physical circumstances may enter into this question. We know that certain maladies are contagious from the mere sight of persons stricken with them. Fits are known to have this effect on those who witness them. Hysterical affections are contagious in a public meeting. Epilepsy itself was so common in the Roman assemblies that it was termed the *morbis comitialis*. The presence of great numbers produces a contagious sympathy. Men, from merely knowing that others are affected, become irritable, nervous, unable to control their feelings. The same individuals have different sentiments, come to different resolutions, possess themselves in more firmness and calmness, in a smaller meeting.

All these considerations dictate the absolute necessity of important questions being either discussed and decided by a smaller body of the people ; or *secondly*, at different times, allowing a due interval

for reflexion; or *thirdly*, by different bodies; or *lastly*, with all these precautions together. We have seen how important a security against the mischiefs of popular assemblies is afforded by the representative principle. But this is not sufficient; for the assembly of the representatives themselves is, though in a much less degree, subject to the same risks of misdecision from ignorance, deception, passion. Therefore the supreme power, even when entrusted to representatives, must, for the safety of the people, and for the same reasons which require the delegation, be exercised in a certain fixed manner and under certain material restraints, voluntarily imposed, and which may be varied at any time, if found inconsistent with freedom and with popular rights.

The three principal checks upon rash and erroneous decisions are therefore these—delay interposed between any proposition and its final adoption; the requirement that it be submitted to more than one body of popular representatives; and the independence of the bodies entrusted by the people, within reasonable limits consistent with their being responsible.

By adopting such courses the people can in no sense be said to part with the whole, or even with any portion, of their supreme power. No man who in the paroxysm of a brain-fever submits to restraint deems his personal liberty infringed. No man who makes a point of submitting his financial affairs to a skilful accountant, or his legal proceedings to a learned adviser, supposes that he parts with the management of his concerns. No man who makes it a rule never to give away a living or other place in his gift, without allowing a certain period after its becoming vacant to elapse, thinks he restrains his power of appointment. He who from distrust of his judgment or his feelings on each individual case lays down a general rule, from which he will not swerve, only feels himself the more safe, without being the less free. Nay, if he even ties himself up by a trust-deed, he only carries the measure necessary for his own protection into more complete effect, without sacrificing his liberty or his rights. So the people are as supreme, in every rational sense of the word, in a constitution which requires a certain delay before any resolution can be taken, or a double discussion, and the assent of two bodies, before it can be made binding, as they would were no such salutary course of proceeding chalked out and defined by the fundamental laws of the Democracy. It is only requisite that both the bodies should owe their origin to the popular choice, hold their commission from the people, and be liable in a period of two or three years to be re-elected or displaced by the people.

1. The allowing time for deliberation, the first of the precautions stated above, is so plain and simple a matter as to require no further elucidation. It may be accomplished by requiring notices, or by referring in the first instance to committees of inquiry, and only

proceeding on their report, or, which is the only effectual course, by requiring repeated stages through which the resolution should pass before it can be made final.

2. The examination by two or more bodies, say by one after the other has fully discussed and adopted any measure, may either be a mere addition to the delay, or it may be a new security of a different kind, according as the two bodies are similar in their constitution, or differ from one another. If the same electors choose both from the same classes of eligible persons, and for the same period of time, then it is plain that the only effect of the double discussion is an increased delay and so many more stages of discussion, as if these had been required to be gone through by the body in which the measure originated. But if either the electors of the two bodies are different, or the persons eligible are different, or the periods for which they are elected are different, the double examination will afford an additional security against error; because the two bodies will in the two former cases represent different classes, and in the third case they will act with different views and feelings, being more or less dependent on the constituents, that is on the people at large, according as their tenure of place is shorter or longer. This difference in the structure of the two bodies will of necessity give rise to a different consideration of the same subject, will occasion a much more full scrutiny of each measure, and will more effectually prevent rashness, and violence, and error.

3. In like manner, the giving a very short period to the trust delegated by the people must always have the effect of making the representatives mere agents in the hands of their constituents. All the mistakes and passions of the people will be reflected in their deputies. Every popular clamour and all the prejudices of the ignorant or fickle multitude will sway the representative body, and the main purpose of representation will be defeated. Yearly elections are therefore sure to produce the worst effects; unless indeed their inconvenience and the indifference likely to arise from a constant repetition of the same proceeding, gives rise to a continuing of the representatives once chosen, and the making elections a mere form, as they become in many corporate and other bodies which adopt this plan, the office-bearers in which when once chosen, are found really to hold their places for life, notwithstanding a yearly election. Three years may be deemed the term on every account most desirable as a protection at once to the representatives for their independence, and to the people for their power.

Beside the methods which have now been considered, others may be resorted to in order to regulate, and as it were temper, the exercise of the popular will; but these are in themselves very objectionable; the true regulators, the proper balance-wheels, are those which have been described.

1. Among these objectionable methods may first be mentioned the giving to one power only in the state the right to propose, or originate measures, what is called the *initiative*. If the less popular body alone has this privilege many violent proceedings may be prevented, and the excitement of the people by what passes among their representatives may be avoided. In no other respect is this contrivance different from giving to the same body a negative upon the more popular assembly's resolutions.

2. Another contrivance of a still more objectionable kind is the requiring a certain proportion of voices in the representative body to carry any measure of superior importance, as two-thirds or three-fourths, instead of a bare majority. This clumsy device is liable to the manifest objection among others that it must frequently prevent measures being adopted which the public good requires. It also tends to form a party within the bosom of the governing body, and to give a minority undue weight and influence.

3. Nearly akin to this, but still worse, is the expedient of declaring certain laws unalterable, or unalterable till after a certain period has elapsed. Nothing can justify so great an absurdity, but the supposition that the circumstances of the state cannot change in the course of the time prescribed for the duration of the laws, and also the supposition, if possible more groundless, that the makers of them were endowed with perfect wisdom and foresight. The people who so far mistrust themselves as to tie up their own hands, expose themselves to the hazard of any change that may happen, and at the same time prevent themselves from profiting by the lessons of experience.

The most signal instance of such an error in modern times was that of the United States in their federal constitution, and the result was neither more nor less than the Americans being obliged to continue the African slave trade for years after its enormous criminality had been universally confessed, and its danger to the country that carried it on had become daily more imminent.

4. The exposing persons who rashly propound innovations to peculiar risks by punishing them if they fail, is another, and if possible a more objectionable expedient adopted with the same view. Of this it may safely be pronounced that it never can prevent the mischief apprehended, and may often prove injurious to the state as well as oppressive to individuals. When the popular clamour is favourable to the proposed change, it is safe to bring it forward, and this is the very occasion on which the check is required. When the fickleness of the multitude leaves the proposer in peril, he is sacrificed because he trusted them, and they betrayed him. When a measure may be wholesome though unpopular, fear of incurring the penalty will prevent it from being brought

forward, at the very time that the public good may most require it.

All such devices as we have now been considering are devised by political artists nearly as clumsy as the mechanician would be who, instead of appointing a balance-wheel to his watch, should by some rude contrivance interrupt the expansion of the mainspring itself, or stop the movement by which the chain unrolled itself on the fusee.

Of all the expedients, both well and ill-advised, which we have described, the history of Democratic governments affords various examples, clearly showing that the necessity of some regulation to the movement of the popular will and power has been felt, and by experience felt, to be absolutely necessary wherever this form of polity has been adopted.

The Athenian constitution, the most purely Democratic of any ever established, interposed frequent delays in the process for altering any old law, or introducing any new one, by requiring various steps to be taken, and requiring also the successive discussion by several bodies differently constituted. The proposition was referred to a select body of the Senate, called *Nomothetes*, fifty in number; the *Prytanes*, to whom these made their report, published it to the city; it was then exercised by other *Nomothetes*, 500 in number, differently chosen from the former; next the *Senate* at large discussed it; afterwards five persons, *Syndics*, were selected for the purpose of defending the old, and of course opposing the new law; and last of all, and after the measure had undergone all these five stages of scrutiny, it was debated and decided upon in the general assembly of the people. Next, no law inconsistent with an old one could be proposed without directly repealing the old one; an admirable rule for any legislature. Again, laws affecting individuals specially, like our bills of pains and penalties, the most tyrannical of popular proceedings, required the presence of 6000 at least in the assembly. Then, many important questions were referred to bodies other than the popular body, and by them finally disposed of. The *Helias*, though chosen by lot, were not a tenth part so numerous as the *Ecclesia* or general assembly; and the *Areopagus* were a selected body chiefly of persons who had held high office, and could pass the scrutiny of the censors, or *Euthyni*; also, they held their places for life. Beside all these restraints of the proper kind there were others of the description which we have seen to be objectionable. Whoever proposed a new law was liable to be impeached by what was termed the *γραφη παρανομων*, the proceeding for unconstitutional legislation; and he might be so prosecuted within a year from his proposition having been made, and even when it had been agreed to, in case the law was found detrimental upon trial.—There were many laws which contained a prohibition against all attempts to change them on any account. Finally,

there was the gross injustice of the *Ostracism*, contrived to keep down popular men and frustrate ambitious schemes, but which also had a direct operation in disinclining all from "meddling with those which are given to change."

The constitution of the United States abounds in checks, some of the proper kind, others of the imperfect kind; and the former are contrived mainly upon the principles of the British legislation. Every bill must go through the several stages or readings, commitment, and report, in each assembly, exactly as in our Houses of Parliament. Then the House of Representatives is differently composed from the Senate; the members must be thirty years old in the latter, twenty-five in the former; the one body holds its commission for two, and the other for six years; the members of the one are elected by the people at large, those of the other by the concurrent voice of the two bodies composing the State Legislatures. Both houses must concur in adopting any measure; and the chief magistrate or President, not chosen by these bodies, but by the Union at large, must assent, in order to give their joint resolution force; but if he refuses, then a majority of two-thirds in each house can ensure its adoption. Again, the power of proposing taxes belongs to one house alone, though the other may amend and alter as well as reject—the gross absurdity of our rule of privilege having been properly rejected by the framers of the American government. The President has the power of pardoning all offences, unless in cases of impeachment. The representatives impeach, and the Senate tries the case. Ambassadors are named, treaties concluded, and judges appointed by the President and two-thirds of the Senate jointly. All judges are irremovable. Lastly, no part of the constitution can be changed without the consent of two-thirds of both houses, a reference to the individual States in the Union, and the approval of three-fourths of their number.

The American government is not deemed to be the less a pure Democracy because of all these checks upon the popular power: but if we look to the still more Democratic government of the French Republic we shall find similar contrivances to regulate the popular will. The constitution of 1793, the most Democratic of all, gave the choice of deputies to the Primary Assemblies, and vested in Electoral bodies, chosen by these assemblies, the power of naming to the legislature the candidates for executive offices, and appointing the criminal judges, whose office was annual. No new law could be proposed but by the report of a committee, nor discussed without a fortnight's notice being given. It must then, if adopted by the legislature, be printed and sent to the parishes of all the eighty-three departments, when, after a delay of forty days, if one-tenth of the voters in the primary assemblies of the majority of the departments (namely one-tenth of the voters in each of forty-two departments)

objected, the law was thrown out; though it had been approved by all the legislative body; if less than this number objected, the law so approved was passed. The constitution of 1795 was less purely democratic; and it had not more checks upon the popular power. The two Councils of Ancients and Five Hundred were not chosen directly, but by Electoral Colleges, whom the Primary Assemblies chose, but whose members had a property qualification. These colleges appointed the judicial officers as well as the members of the Chambers or Councils. The proposal of laws belonged to the Council of Five Hundred; the consent of the Ancients, or the Two Hundred and Fifty, being required to pass each law; and in both chambers the bill must be read three several times. The members of each Council were elected for three years. The executive power was given to five Directors, each of whom held his office five years, and must be forty years of age. But the question of peace or war belonged to the Councils, though all negotiations, as well as military operations, were entrusted to the Directory; the assent of the Councils being only required to ratify any treaty concluded.

We may now observe that some material check to the popular will, and some security against rash proceedings, must exist in every constitution of a popular kind from three important circumstances which are necessarily common to all such forms of government, or which naturally grow out of a Democracy, and are, as it were, antecedent to, and independent of, any positive institution, any such artificial contrivances as we have been considering.

In the *first* place, every popular assembly must of necessity, and in order to continue its existence as a place of business, adopt certain rules to govern its proceedings. There must be a certain notice given of its meetings; its members must conform to a certain course necessary for the preservation of order and quiet; its business must be arranged in a certain method; care must be taken to prevent surprise by requiring notice of the things to be propounded; and, above all, the chance of a few deciding for the whole must be excluded by requiring that no proceeding should be had unless a certain number of the body be present.

In the *second* place, the experience which all popular bodies must acquire in the conduct of affairs, under whatever regulations, by the mere frequency of their meeting, forms a very important circumstance in the action of every democracy. If in every operation experience is important and use leads to expertness, in the conduct of public business, practice is peculiarly calculated to produce this result. We need not go back to the habits of the Athenian people for an illustration of this proposition, or call to mind the nicety of taste even in judging the highest exertions of the rhetorical art, which the habits of attending their assemblies had given to the Attic multitude. The comparison of public meetings in the metropolis and the pro-

vinces,¹ or the contrast of the attempts at such proceedings made in France with the meetings in this country, may suffice. However, the infinite superiority which all regularly constituted bodies, meeting at stated times and by rule, must ever have in managing their business, over the best occasional meeting of persons seldom, if ever, brought together, even in a country where such meetings are customary, at a glance strikes the observer, and shows how widely those unreflecting persons err who derive all their impressions of a Democratic government from their observation of the conduct held by multitudes or mobs.

In the *third* place — and this is perhaps of all others the most important check and regulation, because it grows naturally out of the popular frame itself, like as the governor in a steam-engine derives its power from the movement of the machine — if all the members of the community have a voice, should the people act by themselves, but still more if all interests and classes are represented in the case of the people acting by delegation, there must needs arise in the great majority of instances a difference of opinion which of necessity leads to full discussion. Even a small minority, where free scope is given to debate, will suffice to prevent sudden resolves being formed and ill considered measures being adopted. A few opposing members are sure to gain time. The delay gives them an opportunity of making the reasons against the proposed course be heard and weighed. By the supposition, the people, or their representatives, have only the public good at heart, for it is their own good that they are consulting; and, though they may be ill advised as to it, they cannot have any corrupt bias to neglect, still more to sacrifice it. They must, therefore, be open to conviction, and the sense of the majority will in general not be found resolute against the reasons fully urged by an enlightened few. In the greater number of cases this difference of opinion will be likely to secure the state against rashness, violence, and error. In almost all cases it is likely to secure a delay sufficient for obtaining all the information that can be procured, and for bringing forward all the considerations that can be material to a full discussion of each subject.

The particulars which we have now been examining furnish a very satisfactory answer to those in whose minds a democracy has

¹ An illustration of the nature of mob government may be taken from the heedless statements of fact, and crude, ill-considered assertions of opinion in which the periodical press so largely deals. Compare the facts and opinions in a daily paper, with those in a monthly or a quarterly publication, and observe the wide difference between the rashness of the one and the more respectable caution of the other. Again, compare the more cautious statements of the London newspapers with the extravagant absurdities which so often fill those of the provinces, less experienced than their brethren of the capital, and you need go no further in order to understand how expertness is gained, from habit and use, by even the multitude for whom those papers cater.

become synonymous with anarchy or mob-government. When this idea strikes men they picture to themselves what they have witnessed or have heard of as passing at public meetings, where calm deliberation is not to be expected, because it is in truth by no means the thing for which these assemblies are convened. Excitement, mutual inflammation, adoption of propositions previously resolved upon, giving vent to strong sentiments that oppress the mind and demand relief by utterance, the play of the feelings, not the exercise of the understanding; in a word, action, not deliberation, are the objects of the meeting; and accordingly in most cases no one who differs from the multitude ever thinks of attending; all who come have, generally speaking, made up their minds; or where any division of opinion exists, the whole proceeding becomes a scene of fruitless noise, or possibly of dangerous confusion. This is anything rather than a picture of the popular proceedings even in the worst regulated Democracy. They who prefer that form of government praise a regular and feasible system of popular dominion, not the irregular, and uncontrolled, and disorderly proceedings of a lawless multitude. What they mean by a Democracy is such a system as we have been examining, in which, although the people be the mainspring of the machine, their force is both exerted according to certain laws, and combined with other movements which still further direct its action, although it is always the essential characteristic of the system that all these balancing and regulating movements are themselves dependent upon the great mainspring itself, the people's power.

It is true, as we shall afterwards find, that these checks and balances, for this very reason, can never be so effectual in a pure Democracy as in a Mixed government; but we have no right on that account to undervalue them, or to deny their operation, even in the purest Democracy that can be formed.

CHAPTER XIV.

VIRTUES OF THE DEMOCRATIC POLITY.

Rulers have no sinister interest—Personal ambition has no scope—Illustrations: Louis XIV.; Charles XII.; French Republic and Empire; Washington—Progress of improvement—Purity of public men; its two causes—No incapable and wicked Rulers—Benefits of popular Discussion—Cheap Government—Comparison with Monarchy and Aristocracy—Public Defence—Purity of Manners.

We are now to examine the qualities of the purely Democratic system, that is, the system which, without any monarchical or aristocratic admixture, vests the supreme power in the people.

1. The fundamental peculiarity by which this is distinguished

from other forms of government is, that the people having the administration of their own concerns in their own hands, the great cause of misgovernment, the selfish interest of rulers, is wanting, and if the good of the community is sacrificed, it must be owing to incapacity, passion, or ignorance, and not to deliberate evil design. The sovereign in a monarchy pursues his personal interest, and that of his family; the public good is thus sacrificed, and mischiefs arise to the state when its interests clash with those of the prince. The privileged body in an aristocracy seek after the individual interests of their order, or its individual members, still more injuriously to the community, because they are a more numerous body of favoured persons than the sovereign with his family and his courtiers. But no such detriment can arise to the public good under a purely popular government. At least the chances are exceedingly small, and the mischief can only arise from some party, or some individuals, obtaining so much favour with the people at large as to mislead them for their own ends; a thing of necessarily rare occurrence, because there will always be a conflict of parties in a free state, and the people are prone to jealousy and suspicion of all powerful men.

2. It is, perhaps, only another and more limited form of the same proposition, that one great cause of pernicious wars, and of injurious negotiations, is wanting also in a Democracy. The personal ambition of an individual, his feelings of slighted dignity, his sense of personal honour, as well as his desire of aggrandisement, both to gratify his pride or love of glory, and to augment his influence, by extending his powers of obtaining support at home, can have no place under this scheme of polity. There may be ambitious leaders, whose desire would be to plunge their country into war; but the people will naturally be jealous of them, and at all events, will be disposed to prevent any one aggrandising himself so as to endanger their liberties. No such unutterable atrocity could ever have been perpetrated in a Democracy as the war in which Louis XIV.'s courtiers plunged their country, and the ravaging of the Palatinate, to distract the pampered tyrant's mind from interfering with their measures at home. No party could have hurried republican Sweden into the ruinous contests by which a sceptered madman exhausted her resources and annihilated the influence and the name which her valour had gained under his wiser ancestor. To the ambition of the Carnots and the Dantons of the French Republic bounds were set by the popular government, which had ceased long before a single man's desire of universal empire desolated the country by his conscription, and subjected it twice to a foreign yoke. Had the virtuous Washington himself become enamoured of military glory, and desired to extend the dominion of republican institutions over Canada or New Spain, the same people who had begun even to shew dissatisfaction with

those who, against his will, proposed his third election, and who had refused their commanders leave to perpetuate the renown of their arms by founding an order of merit, would have speedily taught him that war is a game the people are too wise to let their rulers play.

3. The course of legislation in the commonwealth must always keep pace with the improvement of the age. The people, whether acting themselves or through their delegates, and whether these delegates merely follow the instructions of their constituents, or deliberate and decide for themselves, must always communicate to the laws that are made the impression of their own opinions. If the lights and wisdom of their representatives, or of the leading men among them, exceed, as it must, those of the people at large, their legislation never can fall short of the prevailing civility and refinement. No sinister interests can interfere to check the progress of improvement in the legislature. No prejudices of one class, no selfish views can have any weight. The alarms of a sovereign and his court at the advances made in this direction, the fears of a privileged order at the progress made in that, never can stop any measures useful to the frame of society. The advancement may be too rapid, for want of the checks and regulations which an aristocratic body supplies. Rash experiments may occasionally be tried; crude ideas may find their place in the acts of the legislature; but the progress of social improvement, the intellectual advances of the age, will be reflected in the laws which the Democratic councils adopt.

4. The administration of public affairs in a Democracy is more certainly pure than in any other form of government. This arises, *first*, from the publicity which must always be given to every proceeding; and, *secondly*, from the entire responsibility of every public functionary to the people or their representatives. Peculation or abuse of any kind becomes hardly possible in men so jealously watched, and sure to be so severely punished if detected. In proportion as any mixed government approaches to the Democratic model, the same purity in its administration becomes more certain. But in no mixed government can the administration ever be so pure as in a Democracy; because wherever there are either privileged orders, or prices and courtiers, there are parties possessed of certain powers and privileges, who have an interest, real or imagined, in the selfish proceedings of themselves or their adherents, that will not bear close scrutiny, and who are enabled to protect in many instances those who are guilty of abuse. In a democracy no such powers or privileges exist.

5. No risk is run in a Democracy, as in a monarchy, of incapable or of wicked men holding the supreme direction of affairs, either in the legislature or in an executive department. The greatest of the evils which beset a monarchy have therefore no place here. No

infant in the cradle, no driveling idiot, no furious maniac, no corrupt or vicious profligate, can ever govern the state and bring all authority into hatred or contempt. The practice of government only renders the men chosen by the people more able to rule, and more worthy of their trust, while the possession of power makes the sovereign, generally speaking, more unfit to use it by the tendency of all power to corrupt its holder. The ablest and the best men may always be expected to have authority in a free state. The prince's favourites, and the patrician's connections, are sure to be preferred in a monarchy and an aristocracy.

6. The ordinary administration of affairs, as well as the course of legislation, benefits by the interposition of the popular voice. All measures are fully discussed, and the chances of great errors or oversights being committed upon any given occasion, are exceedingly diminished. Popular delusion may prevail now and then; and a rash or heedless course may happen in consequence to be pursued. War has often been a favourite with the people, and when they have become alarmed at defeat, or weary of the expense and the suffering of the contest, they have prematurely wished for peace. Yet it cannot be doubted, that as the pursuit of their interest is the main object of all administration, their judgment, likely in the long run to coincide with that interest, is in proportion likely to be sound. It is not the necessary characteristic of a democratic government, as we have seen (Chap. xiii.), that it should be in the hands of the people at once deliberating, deciding, and acting. Give them time for reflection and inquiry; give the wiser and the better informed among them due weight in the public councils; and the probability is, that safe and enlightened policy will be preferred.

It must, however, be observed, that this virtue a Democracy only possesses in contrast with an absolute monarchy. The ignorance, or caprice, or imbecility of a single ruler may, and often must produce disastrous effects. In an aristocracy it is far otherwise; and there seems little, if any, reason for assigning a superiority of administrative excellence to the Democratic over the aristocratic polity.

7. The great cheapness of the Democratic government is justly to be numbered among its virtues. The support of a monarchy requires of necessity a large expenditure. The sovereign must be surrounded with a costly magnificence. His person and his family must be amply provided with whatever can contribute not only to perfect comfort, but to luxurious indulgence, to splendid representation. His court must, at a heavy charge, be provided with office-bearers, of no use to the community except as contributing to the monarch's dignity. An increase in the number of these is even required for the mere purpose of maintaining his influence in the state. An army, considerably larger than the preservation of the

public peace or the external defence of the country requires, must be maintained to secure the sovereign from all possibility of attack in any domestic event that may happen. Even the representation of the state with foreign powers demands a more expensive establishment than the simple republicans find necessary. All these things exist in an aristocracy, though to a smaller extent; but here, as well as in a monarchy, the habits of the court, and of the refined society in which the ruling class moves, makes the salaries necessary for public functionaries much larger, and greatly increases the number of those functionaries. In a Democracy, the only thing considered is the work to be done; no more officers are employed than that requires; no more is paid for their labour than is an adequate remuneration for it. Even the responsibility imposed upon the public functionary is not compensated by salary; for that, the honour of serving the state is deemed an adequate remuneration. Not only are no useless functionaries employed, but the preservation of the public peace and the support of the government may be secured by an efficient police, and no troops are required but for the public defence; the same constables that seize common offenders protect the persons of all the magistrates.

Thus with a Democracy, even the most popular mixed government will bear no comparison in the article of cheapness. Indeed the court, and its consequential expenses, may fall even heavier on the public purse in a mixed than in a pure monarchy. An aristocracy, like that of Venice, may govern the community with a very moderate expenditure. If Monarchy forms a part of the constitution, its expenses become the heavier from the necessity of maintaining its influence against the conflicting powers of the other orders. Its military establishment may not be larger, if so large; but its civil expenditure is very likely to be more lavish than even a despotism would require. Monarchy in England cannot be supposed to cost so little as from a million and a half to two millions by the year. But we reckon this large sum well bestowed.

8. The resources of a Democracy for public defence are naturally greater than those of any other form of government. The vigour of the most absolute despotism can only act through the fears of men; and an Aristocracy has neither that lever wherewith to move the mass of the people, nor the same patriotic spirit which animates the subjects of a popular government, though it has far more power of this kind than absolute monarchy can possess. But when of the whole people each one feels an individual interest in the protection of the national independence, they will flock to the standard with other hearts than beat in the bosoms of slaves, who care little to avert a conquest that can only change the persons of their tyrants. Among the resources which the democratic spirit

tends directly to call forth, are of course to be reckoned not merely the men, but the money which it places at the disposal of the government. The incredible exertions which free states have made in their defence, when assailed by forces apparently overwhelming, are familiar to every reader; they fill the brightest page in the history of all times. The numbers of men whom small states have raised on such emergencies appear almost beyond belief; as indeed does the gallantry with which they have encountered the far greater force opposed to them. For examples of this democratic spirit we need not travel back to Athens, and Sparta, and Rome; to the days of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Aquæ Sextiæ; ¹ modern history records the devoted valour of the Switzers perishing for liberty; and the Hollanders, ready to banish themselves from Europe, if in Europe they could no longer live free. Nay, our own days have witnessed in wonder the Americans baffling the skill, and repulsing the force of the best troops in the world; and who can have forgotten the marvellous efforts of the infant republic of France, when her whole people rose in arms against their invaders! But the same people, when sunk into the subjects of an absolute monarch, of whose wars they were weary, no longer answered the calls of their chiefs to arm against the enemy, and twice suffered that enemy to march through an unresisting country to the capital itself.

9. The greater purity in a Democracy is not by any means confined to public conduct; a general sobriety and self-command, with the necessity of conforming to the public opinion ever in favour of morals, is an universal characteristic of republican manners. The luxurious indulgence, inseparable from a court, engenders unavoidably a certain corruption, and the vices attendant upon indulgence are never frowned down by courtiers, nor discouraged by courtly example. An Aristocracy is to the full as liable to this observation as a monarchy. It is indeed rather in so far as the members of a sovereign's court partake of aristocratic habits than as the attendants of a monarchy, that they are subject to such censure. But the republican nature is essentially severe; the virtues of temperance, honesty, public spirit, self-denial, which are exotics in a court, are the common growth of the Democratic soil. No party chief, no popular idol, can ever so far or so long obtain preeminence as to inculcate the habits of subserviency, and of fawning, and of falsehood, which too often grow up under the influence of royal or of patrician authority. They who have allowed no other praise to the rulers of the French Democracy in its most exaggerated form have confessed that its cruel aspect was softened by the patriotic feelings, and entitled to command respect by the majesty of republican virtue. The Decemvirs, who for above a year ruled the destinies of France, and disposed of millions without rendering any account, died as poor as the meanest officer who carried into exe-

¹ Aix, where Marius with a handful of men defeated 300,000.

cution the commands of their absolute power. Carnot retired without retaining anything whatever in his possession. Robespierre and St. Just, when put to death, had not above five pounds in the world left of the monthly pittance doled out to each member of the Committee of Public Safety.

Such are the virtues of the Democratic system. Let no one undervalue them; for they are the greatest which any scheme of polity can possess. They all conduce directly and greatly to the happiness of the people; all increase their comforts, maintain their liberties, preserve their tranquillity, improve their virtue. Nor are they to be left out of the reckoning when we proceed to examine the other side of the account, and to view the many considerable vices naturally inherent in this form of polity.

CHAPTER XV.

VICES OF THE DEMOCRATIC POLITY.

Power in irresponsible hands—In hands above all risk—Irresponsibility of popular Chiefs—Popular Tyranny intolerable—Suspicion and Terror—Flattery of the People—Illustrations: France; England; America—Prevention of free Discussion—Disproportioned attention to Questions—Power of the periodical Press—Of Party—Impunity to popular Outrages—Alleged want of Secrecy and Vigour.

In treating of the vices incident to Democracy, it must always be kept in mind that we are speaking of its natural tendency, and not affirming the existence of these defects in every instance, or to their full extent. The precautions taken to counteract them in all cases may have produced some effect; in some cases, may have produced a great effect. No government of this class has ever been established without some of those precautions having been taken; and accordingly there never was any example of a Democratic Commonwealth in which the evils towards which purely popular government tends existed in their full extent. Our present enquiry, therefore, is confined to the natural tendency of that species of government.

1. The first and the worst effect of popular government is, that the supreme power is placed in irresponsible hands. The people exercise their office whether of directly governing the country, as in petty commonwealths, or of choosing delegates to perform this function, accountable to no earthly tribunal. Each individual, too, forms so inconsiderable a part of the body which decides in any instance, that he feels little or no responsibility to rest upon him even as regards his own conscience. As for public opinion, from the nature of the thing it exists not, the people themselves being those whose sentiments are meant when public opinion is spoken of. In

this respect there is a wide difference between Democracy and all other forms of government. A sovereign, however absolute, in any civilized country, feels the weight of public censure, and is sensible of public approval. However little freedom of speech there may be under any despotism, the tyrant knows that men think and feel; he is aware that his cruelty and caprices rouse their indignation, that his infirmities awaken their scorn. So the members of an aristocracy, though far less exposed to the same censure, and though numerous enough to support one another under the weight of popular hatred and contempt, nevertheless, cannot withdraw themselves altogether from the jurisdiction of the popular tribunal, as long as the natural aristocracy has influence, and as long as men live in society. But this check of public opinion cannot influence the people themselves directly. They can only dread having their conduct exposed, and made hateful or despicable in their own eyes, at a moment of calm reflection. This resembles rather the feeble check which conscience imposes upon a tyrant or a patrician oligarchy, than the restraining force of public opinion. It would be exactly the same in its operation, or rather its impotency, with that shadowy restraint of conscience, were it not that men are prone to distrust and suspect each other, and that the people on any occasion of violence or perfidy, of ingratitude or fickleness, will naturally enough look forward to the risk that some of their own body may reprobate or despise the proceeding in contemplation; and may thus be induced to take timely warning, so that they may avoid future exposure to one another.

But it is not only that the holders of supreme power in a democracy are placed beyond the reach of censure; they are likewise secure from all personal risk. Unless they be split into parties, so that one faction may to-morrow exact vengeance for what another has done to-day, the people as a body never can be punished. Their excesses may prove in the result detrimental to themselves, but for any act of cruelty, ingratitude, treachery, fickleness, they can never be visited with vengeance by the victims of their wrong. The tyrant most fenced about with guards, and exercising the most despotic sway, is always, in proportion to his supremacy, subject to fear—his appointed punishment. Many an act is thus prevented, and many a pain is thus endured. Even the patrician body, though far less exposed to such risks, is not beyond their possibility; and, accordingly, aristocratic councils, still more those of an oligarchy, are materially influenced by dread of enraging the people. The Venetian government took especial care always to keep the popular feeling on its side, and so did the Swiss aristocracies. There was no greater error committed by the aristocracy of ancient Rome than the neglect of the people's feelings, and nothing tended more to produce the civil wars and bloody contests which preyed upon, and at last subverted, that Republic.

2. The irresponsibility enjoyed of necessity by the people themselves is, to a certain degree at least, communicated to the popular leader. When a party chief is well supported, and possesses great influence over a large body of adherents, he becomes irresponsible in proportion to his following. He cares nothing for the opinion of his adversaries, because they are sure to assail him, and their judgment is considered biassed and worthless. He is secure of the approval of his own side, and he looks not beyond it. For him, therefore, there exists no such tribunal as the public, and no public opinion can have any influence in controuling his proceedings. It is, if possible, worse in the case of there being no division of parties, and all, or nearly all, the people inclining one way. The popular chief in such a case is armed with the power of a tyrant, without feeling any of the tyrant's dread either of the public indignation expressed by way of censure, or of the same indignation breaking out in acts of violence.

It must, however, be observed that this rigour of a popular chief, unless sustained by wise councils and virtuous actions, never can be of long duration. In proportion as the people is ignorant on all subjects, but especially on state affairs and those questions which concern themselves, this influence may be prolonged a little more or less, but in no case can it ever happen that the follies or the wickedness of such leaders should not work the ruin of their power, even over an ignorant community. For the people's own interests being at stake, they will become jealous and suspicious; events will open their eyes; by the event men are prone to judge, and especially when ignorant of principles; and even the failure of a prudent and right policy may unjustly occasion the downfall of the popular favourite. While his power continues, however, his tyranny is less tolerable than that of any despot; it leaves no escape to its victim, and no redress or consolation under oppression.

3. The same is to be remarked of all popular tyranny, whether spread over the people at large or concentrated, as it generally is, in the hands of certain powerful leaders; there is no escape from it, no redress against it, no solace under it. There is some help and relief to the sufferer who is oppressed by a tyrant or an oligarchy; he has the sympathy of the people. This is withheld from him who is the people's victim; his sufferings are exacerbated by the howl of popular execration or scorn. This has always been felt as a severe aggravation of the wrongs which popular iniquities or caprices inflict, and it is the harder to bear, that it falls heaviest upon the most delicate and sensitive natures. They whom a tyrant destroys at least know that they have earned his hatred; the people's victims may perish because of their services to the power that destroys them. The cruelty of the Parisian multitude, during the sad period of the reign of terror, was raised to a pitch altogether unendurable by their savage exultation in the destruction of those patriots and sages who

had devoted the best energies of their lives to the service of the people, and the establishment of their liberties. It adds a bitter pang to those sufferings rankling in the hearts of high-spirited men, that their reputation, their fair fame with after ages, is exposed to be tarnished by the same tyrant of many heads, under whose displeasure they have unjustly fallen, possibly condemned for their virtues. The illustrious patriot, whom a despot has doomed to die, may lay down his head on the scaffold in the confident hope that history will avenge his wrongs, and embalm his memory for the veneration of the good in all ages. But if Sidney or Russell had fallen by the voice of a misguided people, they never could have felt sure that the dispensers of punishment might not also prove the dispensers of fame, and sully the reputation of those whom they had destroyed.

4. The same popular tyranny subjects men in a pure democracy to constraint, and mutual suspicion, and terror, exactly like an absolute despotism, with this difference, that it is more easy to escape the agents of the royal tyrant, than those of the vulgar scourge, the people everywhere scattered abroad. When the predominance of one party in a Democracy has once been fully established, there is no safety for those who differ with it by ever so slight a shade. The majority being overwhelming, all opposition is stifled. No man dares breathe a whisper against the prevailing sentiments; for the popular violence will bear no contradiction. Hence the suppression of wholesome advice, the concealment of useful truths. It becomes dangerous to declare any opinion, however sound, which is unpalatable to the multitude. Truth must no more be told to the tyrant of many heads than to him of one; nay, mere flattery becomes the food generally offered up, and he who goes before others in the extravagance of his doctrines, or the violence of his language, outbids his competitors for popular favour. This vile traffic is alike hurtful to the people and to those who deal in it. The former are pampered and spoilt; the latter are degraded and debased. For instances we need not go far back into history. The agitators in the French revolution were only safe if they adopted the most violent courses that were propounded. Robespierre succeeded by going beyond all others from the beginning of his public life. Marat went even beyond him, and, had not the revolting nature of his doctrine, recommending wholesale murder in plain terms, led men to pause on his honesty, perhaps on his sanity, he would only have been prevented by his death from outstripping Robespierre himself in popular favour. In this country we all can remember the time when it required extraordinary courage among popular chiefs to say a word against reforming, as it was termed, but destroying, as it meant, the House of Lords; and the most thoughtless and unprincipled demagogues actually pledged themselves, on a day fixed, to propose such a senseless measure, only because in so doing they pandered more profusely to the approved popular tastes. In the United States, as all travellers

are agreed, the tyranny of the multitude exceeds the bounds of all moderate popular influence. No person dares say anything that thwarts the prevailing prejudices, or the popular opinions of the day.

5. The proneness of the people to violent and unreflecting courses, and the fickleness of their resolutions, are to be classed among the vices of a Democracy; for although checks are, and of necessity must be, provided against the continual operation of these failings, else the government could not subsist at all, these checks never can be so effectual as wholly to counteract their operation; and accordingly in the best constituted Democracy, the people will occasionally interfere with the functions of their representatives, sometimes with those of the executive government, sometimes even with the administration of justice. The influence of the constituents upon their representatives never can be entirely suspended during the period of the delegated trust. The day of election must always be looked to by the latter, and the deputy's conduct must be more or less influenced by his dread of that ordeal. Hence he will be slow to offend on matters of extreme interest; and each succeeding question is apt for the time, as we have already observed, to be the theme of as extreme anxiety as if there were none other in the political world. If indeed the deputy has good reason to believe that this interest will subside, and that it is not only ephemeral, but unlikely to be awakened when once forgotten, he may follow the dictates of his own judgment. But if the feeling is seated deeply, and likely to be permanent, no representative will venture to resist its current. Who in America, coming from the southern states, will dare propose slave emancipation? Who in France will explain the operation upon agriculture, of equally dividing all lands on the owner's decease? Who in England will shew the difficulty of carrying on the government without some nomination boroughs, and the innocence and purity of these compared with the smaller popular places? All these topics may be founded in error; it may be impolitic or unjust to adopt the measures to which their assertion leads; that is not the present question: it is enough for this purpose to affirm, that at least they are highly important, deserving full discussion as experiments never tried, and yet ever since the light of experience has been had whereby to guide us in the enquiry, no one has dared to broach them. And why? Because the people, whose highest interests require their full and deliberate discussion, will not bear them to be so much as mentioned.

6. It is an error and a mischief of a similar kind that subjects receive a very disproportioned degree of consideration in consequence of the course taken by popular taste and feelings. The question immediately before the public, provided it be of a kind to interest the multitude, is reckoned the only one worth attending to, and the general disposition is to act upon it, as if none other could

afterwards arise. Thus a tax would be repealed without regard to the substitute required to replace its produce; a war would be entered into on grounds of feeling, and without regard to policy; a peace hastily made when the war proved for the moment unsuccessful; a favourite rewarded without reference to other claims for which this would lay the ground; an adversary deprived of his rights without regard to the shock thus given to all property. Not only the present question is overrated, but questions of a personal kind, how trifling soever, always rouse the passions most powerfully, and are suffered to engross all attention, excluding the most important subjects which are of a general or a repulsive nature. No account is here taken of the delusions which ignorance of their real good may bring upon the people; and of their readiness to take up, from that ignorance, any wild fancies which crafty men may dress up in plausible colours. Better education can alone provide a remedy for this evil; it is not peculiar to the people; and, even in their uninformed state, they, like all other classes, may by means of free discussion learn to purge their minds of poisonous errors, and to distrust ignorant or designing advisers.

7. In these modern times, when the press has become so prominent a portion of the people that Mr. Windham called it a "Power in Europe," and others have decorated it with the name of a "Fourth estate in the realm," it is impossible to pass over the fact of periodical writing possessing a far greater influence in a Democracy than under any other form of government. The people at large are easily deceived by confident assertion, mistaking its hardihood for the boldness of sincere conviction. They see things positively asserted in print, in the same print in which so many truths are also recorded, but by very different hands: they do not draw the distinction; and above all they never inquire from whom all this body of narrative and dogmatism proceeds. No names are given; and yet this very concealment of the author tends to gain a belief for what he says, because the reader at any rate knows nothing against him. Yet he may be the most worthless, as he is often the most malignant and despicable, of his species; he may be a creature so utterly insignificant that no human being would attach the smallest importance to either his story or his opinions; but, without ever reflecting on this, and without ever waiting to ask who says all these things, the people suffer the grossest falsehoods, the merest fabrications, and the most calumnious imputations to pass current, and if repeated, as they may daily be, to find a place in their belief. Whoever has attended to the contents of the American newspapers, and whoever has read those of the French Republic, will confess that they very far surpass in slander, falsehood, and senseless violence the British press. That is assuredly bad enough, but the American is much worse; and then, in this country, little effect is produced by it on the course of the government. Of late years its

indiscriminate scurrility having increased, and its moderate regard for truth been diminished, its influence has become notoriously exceedingly trifling compared with what it was while more decorously and more ably conducted; but in the United States all its brutal violence, and all the exposures made of the wretches in whose hands it is, have failed signally to lessen its acceptance with the people, and its influence is very considerable upon the administration of public affairs.¹

8. We have elsewhere, examined at length the effects of party. In a Democracy its sway is fully greater than in any other government; and in an Aristocracy its worst evils arise from the appeals always made by contending factions to the body of the people whom they endeavour, with too much success, to cajole, to seduce, and to corrupt. Nothing remains to be added in this place.

9. We have in passing adverted to the interference of the people in the government, and even in the administration of justice, above all of criminal justice. Such acts, however, can only be regarded as outrages upon all law, as great crimes committed by the mob rather than the people. Nevertheless, the actors in such enormities may too securely reckon upon the protection from a powerful party espousing their cause, and from the slowness of the public officers to do their duty in a country whose institutions make every political functionary, except the press, answerable to the people at a given time; nay, the judge himself, as far as jurymen adjudicate. It must, I fear, be admitted, that in the United States men escape prosecution, and if prosecuted are saved from conviction in cases of popular violence, which in any government of the old world would, as a matter of course, call forth the most severe visitation of the criminal law. It is quite unnecessary to cite the far more dreadful outrages of mob-violence which stained the French Revolution; nor would it be fair. Those scenes were enacted rather in a crisis of change, and under a kind of anarchy, than in a country subject to a regular Democratic government.

Among the defects of a Democracy no mention has been made of the want of unity and secrecy in its councils, and of vigour and dispatch in its measures of negotiation, of war, and of police. That this form of government is naturally liable to those charges may be admitted; but expedients can so easily be resorted to for supplying the natural defect that it can hardly be worth while to enumerate it among the evils of a Democracy. There never has happened any injury to the United States, either from too great publicity being given to its councils or from the want of a vigorous executive in war; while the history of the French Republic proves unquestionably that the most popular government is not incompatible with the en-

¹ Of course, both as to America and this country, these remarks must not be understood as of universal application. There are most honourable exceptions in both countries.

trusting to individuals as extensive powers, civil and military, as the most extensive and complicated operations, whether of finance, or negotiation, or war, can demand.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

Connexion—Religious Establishments impossible in a Democracy—Peculiarity of Religious differences—Objection that Establishments violate Conscience—That they are made State engines—That they restrain natural Liberty—Benefits—They secure Instruction—Equalise the Burthen—Avoid evils of Election—Check Religious excitement—Prevent Sectarian zeal—Prevent Sectarian political violence.

The various institutions connected with the happiness of the people will form the subject of consideration under the second of the general heads into which Political Philosophy is divided, the *Functions* of government, as contradistinguished from its *Structure*. These institutions belong not generally speaking to one political system rather than another, but may flourish more or less in all, though the genius of some governments is more favourable to many of them than the genius of others; as for example, there is scarcely any likelihood of establishments which presume the existence of public credit, that is the secure possession and free employment of capital, or of institutions for the diffusion of general knowledge, flourishing under a despotic government; nevertheless the existence of such credit and institutions is not absolutely incompatible with despotism itself, and accordingly, though with crippled means, and to a limited extent, they have been known to find a place under even eastern monarchies.

But there is one establishment which appears incompatible with the existence of a Democracy, or at least only compatible under restrictions hardly reconcilable with its healthful growth, and that is a system of religious instruction, endowed and patronized by law, with a preference given to it by the state over all other systems, and a preference given to its teachers over the teachers of all other forms of belief,—in other words, a Religious Establishment. Where all the people are equal, and no privileged order is recognized, it seems impossible to give a preference by law to the teachers of one class of believers, however numerous these may be compared with all other classes of believers. In matters of a temporal kind, men may differ widely, some approving one doctrine, some another. But were the state to appoint teachers of one of these disputed systems of science, or of morals, or of legislation, and give them an endowment with-

held from the teachers of other systems, no material injury would be done to the feelings or the comfort of any class, and the government would be perfectly justified in preferring the teachers of a system tending to support the peculiar policy of the state. It is otherwise with respect to religious instruction. The happiness of men and their most anxious feelings are so deeply interested in their religious tenets, that any preference given by the state to the teaching of religious doctrines which they sincerely believe to be erroneous proves excessively galling to them, and the same persons who could well bear to pay taxes which should go to the propagation of a physical or even of a moral theory deemed by them to be erroneous, would feel seriously aggrieved in paying their contributions towards propagating a religious doctrine which they believed to be false. Not to mention that although a government may have some legitimate interest in the dissemination of moral or political opinions favourable to the policy of the constitution, no government can have any but an unlawful and sinister object in view by seeking the support of any system of religion, or forming a political alliance with its professors.

But there is another reason why no Democratic government can support a National Religion, at least in the modern sense of the term. That in all Christian countries means the endowment of a class set apart from the rest of the community, and forming a peculiar body, a sacred order of men, who hold their functions for life. Even if these men are chosen by the freest election of the people, and removable at the people's pleasure, they are still an order of men whose influence is personal and who are unconnected with the government. This is not consistent with the Democratic scheme. Their being an order of men in choosing whom whole classes of the people are unqualified to join, renders their existence still more repugnant to democratic principle. But it is hardly possible to have an Established Religion, the professors of which are not to hold their situations for life. A greater curse to the peace of a country and the happiness of its society than a priesthood dependent upon the breath of popular favour at every instant, cannot be imagined. Yet the existence of a class endowed by the state, of men possessing great personal weight, and nevertheless unconnected with either the government or with any temporal concerns, and holding their places for life, is wholly repugnant to democracy. The judges being appointed for life is only rendered compatible with purely popular government, by the intermixture of popular influence with their functions, through the appeal to the legislature and through the office of jurors. A clerical order of great influence, paid for life, and subject to no appeal nor to any control, is wholly inconsistent with pure democracy; as much so as an order of knighthood or of nobility.

If it be said that some such plan as is adopted in several of the American Commonwealths would reconcile a state religion with a

Democracy, namely, obliging every one to pay his tax to the state, but the state giving it over to the minister of whose sect the contributor is a member, the answer is that this may by some be said to constitute no Religious Establishment, because no preference is given to one faith over another. It is only a mode of raising funds for religious instruction; a mode, too, which the advocates of pure Democracy might object to as compelling every man to choose his sect.

We are thus led to inquire whether this impossibility of having an Established Religion in a Democracy be a virtue or a vice of that system; and this raises the question respecting the virtues and vices of Religious Establishments.

The objections to them are extremely manifest; but three of these it may be enough to state, because they seem to comprise all the others.

In the *first* place, it is a serious grievance to any person that he should be compelled to support a religion which he conscientiously disapproves, and this whatever be the form of the government under which he lives. Men are far more sensitive upon religious differences than upon any other differences, or indeed upon almost any other subject. We in vain try to persuade them that the points upon which they dissent from their neighbours are extremely insignificant compared with those upon which all are agreed. On the contrary, the less the distance which separates two sects, the greater seems generally to be the force that repels them from one another. In vain we try to remind them how much better it is that the bulk of the people, especially the lower orders, should be taught some religion, and kept in some moral restraint by the discipline of some sacred functionary, than that they should go without any instruction or discipline at all. The answer ever at hand is, that such subjects are too sacred to admit of compromise, and that nothing can justify helping to propagate religious errors. In short, experience proves that this is a subject in which the bulk of men feel, and do not reason.

In the *second* place, although religious instruction be the motive of supporting an establishment, the civil magistrate always contrives to gain from that establishment secular support. This is both hurtful to the constitution by introducing a disturbing force which always acts in favour of one party in the state, and it is hurtful to the interests of religion itself by making its teachers political instead of merely religious men, subjecting their doctrines and their conduct to secular influences. "Every idea (says Dr. Paley) of making the church an engine, or even an ally of the state, converting it into a means of strengthening or of diffusing influence, serves only to debase the institution and to introduce into it numerous corruptions and abuses."

¹ Moral and Political Philosophy, Book vi., Chap. x.

In the *third* place, the establishment of one religious class tends to the restraint of freedom, both in speech and thought, to intolerant practices, and to obstructing the progress of general improvement. Not only religious discussion is checked, but power and influence is gradually obtained by the predominant sect, and the civil magistrate is induced to extend its influence and to enforce the exclusion of other sects beyond the mere preference given by means of the endowment. The various institutions to the benefit of which members of the Church alone are admitted; the many laws at different times made in all countries to put down dissent; the opposition so often given to useful changes by the privileged body; are all strong illustrations of this proposition.

It is commonly objected as a further evil of an establishment, that it imposes upon certain classes of the community a burthen from which others are exempt, the dissenter having to support his pastor, while the churchman is provided with religious instruction for nothing; and if, instead of an endowment in land, or tithes, or both, the state church is supported by taxes, then the dissenter pays a double tribute. The only reason for not enumerating this among the objections to an established church is, that to a certain degree it may be supposed applicable to the purely voluntary system; for the dissenters pay if they chuse, and the persons who do pay, suppose there is no establishment, pay by so much more than those who do not. Besides, if it be said that the churchmen benefit by the state clergy, so do the dissenters, both by the learning upon theological subjects which is thus encouraged and diffused, and by the good effects of the clergy's teaching upon the common people. The three objections first stated are the real grounds for opposing the establishment by the state of one system exclusively.

It would be vain to deny the weight of these objections to an Establishment; they are undoubtedly of a very serious kind; and daily experience everywhere bears testimony to their importance. Nevertheless, it seems that upon the whole there result greater mischiefs from having no establishment at all, and that the balance is sensibly in favour of such an institution. This arises from the very peculiar nature of the instruction which religious teachers seek to convey.

1. If the people were left to supply themselves with religious knowledge, and the moral instruction which always accompanies the communication of it, there can be no doubt that they would very often remain without it; at least the classes which most require it would be the least apt to obtain it. For the very want of it implies an ignorance of its value and uses; and hence they who were without it, and to whom it is therefore the most needful, would be for that very reason the last to seek it. This has been so much felt in countries which by the nature of their government could have no state church, that they have fallen upon the expedient already

mentioned, of requiring each person to pay a church rate or tax, towards some one minister whom each might chuse for himself, a mode for providing for religious instruction which is liable to manifest objections. But unless some such contrivance be resorted to, this obvious injustice will always be done. They who are sensible and public-spirited will pay for those that are not. Whoever chuses to save his money will be able to benefit by the churches which his more liberal neighbour supports. Even if he be not allowed to attend the service in these, he will profit by the improvement in the conduct of those who do; and this injustice and inequality is exactly one of the evils objected in another view to an establishment. — The compelling men to pay for the support of opinions which they do not hold, is another and the main objection; yet, as it is very possible that a person may agree with no one sect in the community, the case of such person falls within the scope of the objection.

2. If the people are to provide for the support of their own pastors, so must they select them also. The objection is quite as great to requiring men's profiting or endeavouring to profit by the ministrations of a state minister, as to requiring their support of a creed they disapprove. Then the office of religious instructor must be elective. Who can doubt the evils to which this must give rise — evils, above all, to religion itself? If any one quality is requisite in a pastor it is his authority with the flock; the teacher must therefore be independent of the hearer. If he holds his place from the congregation, his doctrine must be suited to its palate; he must preach, not the word of God but of man. He must submit to the caprices of the multitude and study popular arts. His character must be degraded far below the debasement of the political demagogue; inasmuch as he has sacrificed much higher things, stooped from a far greater height to reach the necessary pitch of degradation. He who has accommodated his sacred functions to the caprice of the multitude has done an impious act and forfeited all claims upon the respect of rational men by losing his own. Even if the original choice is to be the people's only interference with their pastor, still the process is both unseemly and debasing. The arts of a popular candidate ought never to have a place in the habits of holy men; the pulpit of all places is no place for canvassing. Besides, if the people are split into parties respecting the choice of a minister, as they of course will be when that choice is left free, how are the defeated minority to profit by the ministrations of the man whose unfitness they have been proclaiming, and even been violent in proclaiming? The result must be, that on every election a secession of the defeated party to hear their own favourite will take place, and thus each congregation will be indefinitely split. However, we are making a groundless, a gratuitous assumption, when we suppose that the people's interference can be confined to the day of election; for a free and voluntary system and the absence of all Establishment pre-

supposes that the pastors are to be provided with funds to support them by the voluntary contributions of their flocks. An endowment or a compulsory provision, leaving the choice in the people, is one form of a Religious Establishment; it is, in fact, the form in which the Scottish national Church was established for several years after the Revolution of 1688. When we speak of the people in any community being without a state church, we mean that they shall not only elect but maintain their religious teachers; and, accordingly, one of the arguments often put forward by those who object to Establishments is their tendency to make the minister careless and indolent in discharging his duties. It is, indeed, the reason mainly relied upon, next to that of the violence done to conscience; and even this may also be urged against the kind of establishment now under discussion; for a pastor chosen for life, and for life endowed, may change his doctrine, may become heterodox as well as indifferent, and then men are compulsorily providing funds for preaching error.

3. It is, perhaps, only giving another form of the same objection, if we observe how very little the people are to be trusted with a discretion upon religious subjects. If their excitement upon political questions is perilous and requires the regulating checks which we have so often discussed (Chap. xiii.), far more is their excitement to be dreaded in matters that appeal directly to the much more powerful feelings connected with religion—matters upon which the bulk of men, in all ages and countries, have been found to feel only and not to reason. The history of the species is full of examples fearfully proving the force of religious impressions in disturbing the judgment and even perverting the whole heart of man, rendering him capable of the most savage, as well as the most absurd actions. It is needless to dwell longer on a topic which at once shows the expediency of an Established Church, the only effectual means of checking and tempering these overpowering feelings. All the arguments in favour of checks and balances apply to this with redoubled force.

4. The indolence imputed to the Ministers of a State Church may certainly be carried too far; but it is, perhaps, less hurtful, even when thus found in excess, than the extreme activity of the popular sectary. Whoever has well considered the effect of sect striving against sect, of each pulpit being made the place of attack upon its neighbouring chair, of rival expounders seeking to render themselves more precious in the eyes of their hearers by outdoing one another in the rigour of their outward penances, and the extravagance of their awful denunciations; of an active competition even in the vehemence and the mystery of their spiritual dogmas; will confess that quietism is the safer extreme, if into one extreme or the other the religious instructor must run. It is better, as has been said that a little indolence and quietism should be purchased by a

state provision, than that the people should be exposed to all the mischiefs of excessive and fanatical activity, of the zeal which burns with far more heat than light. *Mallem illorum negligentiam, quam istorum pravam diligentiam.* An indolent priesthood, too, is seldom a persecuting one ; it is a better because a more peaceable neighbour than an over-zealous volunteer system. Yet there is also a preventive of too great indolence ; the activity of sectaries, where toleration is established, will always prevent the state endowment from engendering too great indifference among its ministers.

5. Among the objections to an Establishment we found a very important one in the political uses to which it is capable of being turned, its ready subserviency to the views of the Civil Magistrate. But a great mistake would be committed by any one who should suppose that no secular interference can belong to the most entirely voluntary system of religious instruction. The nature of sectarian priests is to the full as busy as that of an established clergy, and it is more restless, self-confident, and intolerant. For examples of this we need not go back to the seventeenth century. Our own times afford instances in abundance, to prove how easily the sectarian pastor unites with his sacred calling the secular functions of the political agitator. This is not confined to Ireland ; we have experience in this country of its operation ; and if any proof were wanting, how very easy it is for zealous men to pretend, or perhaps really to feel, a call towards secular politics as a part of their spiritual vocation, let it be remembered, that both in Scotland and in England the purely temporal question of the Corn laws has in our own day been taken up by all the dissenting teachers of both countries, upon the alleged ground that it is a religious question, a ground, however, disclaimed by all rational statesmen, how strongly soever attached to the opinion which these zealots supported. There is, in truth, no one question which such persons may not represent as falling within the scope of their sacred ministry ; and if the whole community were under their guidance in spiritual matters, its civil administration, if it fell not into their rash and clumsy hands, would at least be materially affected by their influence.

It is certainly, if not a positive benefit resulting from an established church, a very great set-off against the inconvenience of its political subserviency, that it enables the government to be administered without any serious obstruction arising from the operation of public feelings excited by spiritual guides. The influence of the state over the pastors of the people may be sometimes abused to civil purposes ; but the nature of religious zeal cannot permit us to doubt that this is a far less mischief than the existence of an all powerful and wholly independent clergy in any community.

It thus appears that among the evils of a pure Democracy is to be reckoned the necessary want of an Establishment for religious instruction, and the mischief that arises in a secular view from the unrestrained acting and fierce zeal of rival sects working upon the minds of the people. Their influence, of course, will be much more universal and powerful in a community which admits of no privileged orders, no distinction of ranks ; a community in which all public functionaries, including jurors themselves, are under the perpetual superintendence and controul of popular opinion and popular feelings.

In the deductions which we have stated on this important subject, as in every other part of our inquiries, we have made no allowance for the ultimate effects of Education. In no respect are these more fit to be considered than in their connexion with Religion and with Ecclesiastical polity. But this forms a separate subject, and as yet we have been throughout considering the state of society as we at present find it.

CHAPTER XVII.

PROVINCIAL AND COLONIAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

Popular ignorance and inattention on Provincial affairs—Jealousy—Illustrations from America ; from Canada—No natural incapacity in Democracy—Roman History origin of the opinion—Roman Policy—Carthaginian Policy—Grecian Policy—Dutch Policy—Conduct of Spain—General inference.

It is a very ordinary subject of complaint against Democratic Commonwealths that they always maltreat their provinces and their colonies. There may be some ground for this charge ; because there is certainly a great disposition in the people of any country to regard exclusively the interests and feelings of the community to which they belong, and it always will be difficult to fix the attention of any nation upon the concerns of its remote possessions. The knowledge of detail, indeed, which the due understanding of such subjects requires, can hardly ever be obtained by the people at large in any country. The affairs of their home government, and domestic economy, are pretty generally understood, at least in their outline : the affairs of distant settlements, in circumstances so unlike anything that they are acquainted with at home, can hardly be comprehended at all.

But it is not merely from ignorance or inattention that the people are likely to misgovern their remote provinces. The feeling of jealousy, or alienation, or whatever it is that gives the people of every country a prejudice against foreigners, enters largely into the sentiments with which the provincial inhabitants are regarded. They

are considered, too, as a subordinate class, as not only a foreign, but also a subject nation. Their interests are supposed to be wholly subservient to those of the parent state. Their resistance to its commands is resented as something rebellious and unnatural. No account is taken of the balance of debt and credit between the two parties, in regard of benefits conferred and received reciprocally. All is assumed to have been bestowed by the Parent State at her expense, and nothing gained by her at the expense of the Province.

It is, lastly, to be borne in mind, that while the people at home are themselves the rulers, or rule by delegates of their own choice, the inhabitants of the distant provinces have no direct share in the government; they are not represented by men of their choosing; if they are permitted to manage their domestic concerns, it is all that they can expect; even that power, is constantly curbed and interfered with where the interests of the people at home may seem to require it; and the weakness of the Colony or Province exposes it to be at all times oppressed, should the disposition of the governing people prompt such a course.

It is better to avoid, if possible, all invidious allusions on this somewhat delicate subject. But the truth of history, both more and less recent, requires us to reflect upon the conduct of the people in this country towards our American fellow subjects. The American war was extremely popular in Great Britain for some years, and only ceased to be the favourite of the nation when its disastrous effects had increased our burthens, doubled our public debt, and lowered the reputation both of our Councils and of our Arms. The Colonists were reprobated as rebels who had dared to revolt and set at defiance the power of the country which founded their settlements. The great advantages for so many ages derived by England, almost all at the expense of the Colonies, were wholly forgotten; and they who had in reality paid so dearly for all our gains were treated as guilty of black ingratitude, only because they refused to let those who had been so long profiting by their mercantile oppression reduce them to the still more abject slavery of political subjection. Yet all who most sensibly felt for the glory of England held fast by this gross delusion. Even the staunchest friends of freedom at home would suffer no exportation of that precious article; and Lord Chatham himself lived and died in the equal reprobation of Colonial independence and of Ministerial incapacity, in conducting the war to extinguish it.—So of late years, the Canadians having claimed to enjoy a more entire controul over the moneys raised from them to support the public expenses, and having in one small district committed unjustifiable outrages, the whole constitution of the Province, as secured by Statute, was suspended, and Dictators appointed to govern them with absolute power. Yet this was done without a murmur from any part of the people in England, or Scotland, or Ireland, some of whom would have risen in rebellion, and others

loudly threatened to rise, had the constitution been suspended at home in any one Borough-town that sent representatives to Parliament. This silence, too, was preserved unbroken, nay, the rigorous measures against the Canadians were fully approved, by the very parties both in Parliament and in the Country, who affect upon every occasion the most tender regard for popular rights, and are always the foremost in demanding an extension of the people's privileges and power.

It must however, in justice towards the Democratic polity, be admitted, that there seems no fundamental incapacity of a purely popular government to administer its provincial affairs justly, and prudently, any more than to conduct its Foreign affairs, its negotiations, and its wars. Ignorance of their real interests, and culpable neglect of justice, may mislead the people in a Democracy as they may mislead the rulers under any other constitution. Such impolicy and injustice may be fitly reprehended, and it is a wise and virtuous Statesman's duty to expose and to resist it. But there seems nothing in the form of a popular government which is incompatible with politic and equitable administration of its Provincial affairs.

The Roman History has probably on this question misled most inquirers; certainly, it is upon this that Mr. Hume has grounded his proposition, which he reckons among those undoubted principles of political science, that free States are always the most oppressive to their provinces.¹ It is impossible to deny that the barbarous people of Rome treated their foreign subjects with grievous injustice and harshness. We have seen it fully, in Ch. vii. But we must bear in mind the peculiarities of the Roman State and its Colonies. A single city, with a very small surrounding territory, resolved to conquer, first, all Italy, and then the world. Its whole policy was formed upon this scheme of universal aggression. Each acquisition was treated as a foreign conquest; and the Colonies of Roman citizens, successively planted in those conquered territories, were placed there for the purpose of keeping the inhabitants in subjection; they were advanced posts of the central army at Rome; they were military stations, to be maintained and governed as detachments of the public force quartered in an enemy's country. The natives were treated with various measure of harshness, but always as conquered tribes. The colonists were more kindly treated, but always as men under strict military discipline, and who were sent on a service of their employers or commanders, and not for their own ease and interest. Accordingly, all the proceedings, both in those colonies and in the provinces at large, were of a military nature. They were regarded, the provinces as recruiting grounds for the Roman army, the colonies, as stations representing the city, and aiding the provincial magistrates sent from Rome to

¹ Essays, lli.

rule the vanquished people. The *quæstor* yearly reported the means of aiding the state by their returns of wealth and of men able to bear arms. The maritime territories contributed by their seamen to equip the navy; their inhabitants always served in the Roman fleets. But it was really the Patrician and not the Democratic oppression that the remote parts of the Empire felt most grievous. Accordingly, when the Commonwealth was overthrown, we are told by Tacitus that the Provinces felt not at all averse to the change, holding in natural dislike the Senatorial and Aristocratic domination; and he states, with his accustomed precision and conciseness, in what manner this yoke had chiefly galled them. "*Certamina potentum, avaritia magistratûm, invalido legum auxilio, quæ vi, ambitû, postremo pecuniâ turbabantur.*"¹ Accordingly, Cicero tells us that the repeal of the laws to prevent proconsular oppression would have been the greatest mitigation of it, as in that case those magistrates would only have plundered for their own gratification, instead of also extorting enough to obtain impunity by corruption at home. It is plain that all these vexations belong to the Aristocracy of Rome, the most profligate and unprincipled ever known. There is nothing in the facts affecting the Democratic regimen.

The Carthaginian History is, as we have had frequent occasion to remark and to lament, far more meagre than that of any other ancient state, although it would have been the most interesting of all ancient annals next to those of Rome and Athens. It appears that the army was chiefly composed of mercenary troops raised from all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean; and the celebrated description which Livy gives of Hannibal's army, in all probability, was applicable to the forces generally which Carthage sent into the field, as well as those with which she overran first Spain and then Italy. The Colonies of Carthage appear to have much more nearly resembled the settlements of modern times. For although they were so far planted like those of Rome in conquered countries, and were not, like those of Greece and of modern Europe, established in order to carry off the surplus population from the mother country, yet the only benefit which Carthage derived from them beside the strengthening of her hold over the conquered nations was the trade, which she appears to have kept exclusively to herself. Polybius² has preserved two very curious Treaties made with Rome; one of them as early as the beginning of the Republic immediately after the expulsion of the Tarquins, and which allows the Romans, whose commerce was then in its infancy, to trade with the Carthaginian settlements in Sicily and on the African coast. The other Treaty was made at a somewhat later period, when the spirit of commercial jealousy had been awakened,

¹ Ann., Lib. I. cap. 2.

² Lib. III. cap. 22.

and it prohibits the Romans from entering the ports either of the African, or Sicilian, or Sardinian Colonies of Carthage, unless driven thither by stress of weather, and expressly forbids them to "plunder, trade, or settle."

The Greek Colonies were all planted, both those of the Dorians in Sicily and Italy, and those of the Ionians and Æolians in Asia, with the view of finding an outlet for the surplus people of the Greek cities, surrounded as they were, each of them, by hostile neighbours, and therefore unable to extend their territories. The names, as Dr. Smith has observed, indicate the difference between these and the Roman Settlements; the latter were termed "coloniz"—plantations; the former ἀποικίαι—emigrations; leaving of home. Accordingly, nothing like tyranny appears to have been exercised over them by the Metropolis, the parent city or state. The colonists governed themselves as they pleased; they were expected to feel kindly and respectfully towards the mother country, and not to enter into any hostile proceedings against her; and she in return, when she could, gave them succour and protection. Thucydides has preserved a kind of debate between the Corinthians and their Colonists of Coreyra, in which the former complain that the latter alone, of all other Colonists, have taken engagements with their enemies. They affirm, as a thing universally known, that their kindness towards all their other Colonies had uniformly obtained from them the return of affection and respect, which Coreyra alone had withheld.¹

The Dutch Republicans are supposed to have governed their valuable Colonies worse than any other nation in modern times. Certainly they have fallen into political errors and worse crimes, not easily to be understood in so sensible, so reflecting, and so worthy a people. The powers given, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to their East India Company, greatly exceeded any that were ever granted by other countries to trading Corporations of this description. They had the absolute right, not only of administration but of conquest, of negotiation, of making war and peace, of conducting military operations, of exclusive trade, and of legislation in all its branches. The different great towns in the United Provinces named each so many of the Sixty Directors. The Company kept always on foot a large army and navy, amounting, at the end of the last century, to 80 ships of war of from 30 to 60 guns, and 25,000 men. The misgovernment of the Settlements thus administered, or rather thus abandoned, by the State, became proverbial under this powerful body; and the cruelties exercised, both against their subjects, the native powers, and the Europeans who attempted to interfere with the monopoly, have made the Dutch name odious in the East. The power of making laws was, among other enormities, exerted by the Company in punishing smuggling

¹ Lib. I. cap. 35.

with death; a somewhat characteristic proceeding in lawgivers who were traders and monopolists as well as rulers. In the West Indies, the policy of the Dutch was not quite so bad; but they have the vile distinction of having always been the most cruel of masters in the treatment of their unhappy slaves; and their continental possessions, as a just retribution of their wickedness, have more than once been exposed to imminent hazard of being overrun by the Maroons, the revolted negroes, who have, in consequence of ill-treatment, established themselves, for near a century, in the forests of Surinam.

It is, however, in vain to represent the impolitic and harsh Colonial administration of the Dutch as the result of the Republican constitution. Bad as is that administration, there have been far worse. Portugal never was famous for well treating either her Asiatic or her American subjects; and the cruelties of the Spaniards towards the Indians much exceed anything that has ever been laid to the charge of the Hollanders. The whole Colonial administration of Spain, indeed, has been in all ages the model of impolitic and tyrannical government.

Upon the whole, it seems reasonable to conclude, that there is nothing in the Democratic Polity peculiarly incompatible with the wise and humane management of Colonial affairs, beyond the tendency which great bodies of men have to confine their attention and their cares within the bounds of their own immediate interests, and the disposition which those who represent the people in a government have to consult the views and humour the wishes, rather of those to whom they are accountable, than of those with whom they hold no specific relation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NATURE AND ORIGIN OF MIXED GOVERNMENT.

Connexion—Checks imperfect in a Democracy—In an Aristocracy—In a Monarchy—All Make-shifts, and Why—Illustrations from Action of two Legislative Bodies—From Measures of English Parliament in 1834—Definition of Mixed Government—Illustrations: Poland; Hungary; Sparta; Carthage; Rome—Modern Mixed Monarchies—Opinion of Tacitus; Cicero—Essential Qualities of Mixed Government—British and French Constitutions—Illustrations—Origin of Mixed Governments—Of the Spartan; Roman; Venetian; Genoese; Dutch; French; Scandinavian; British.

In examining the checks and regulations provided for tempering the force of popular power in Democratic governments we found that there was a serious defect in the operation of those which owed their origin to the people themselves, because, being under their control, the efficacy of the countervailing principle was unavoidably precarious. In like manner, we found that when the method of securing full discussion of public measures consisted

in having two or more bodies which are required to concur before they can be adopted, if these several bodies are of the same kind, owing their origin to the same class of the people, composed of the same description of citizens, and holding their appointments for the same period of time, the security for mature deliberation is much more feeble than if those bodies were differently constructed and appointed. Now in every pure Democracy this defect must needs impede the operation of all checks upon the popular will. So in every pure Aristocracy the checks must be formed out of the Patrician body, and there can be no power to balance that body effectually, although contrivances may give the benefit of delay, and so prevent rash counsels from doing irreparable mischief. So, lastly, in every pure Monarchy, all the balances being under the sovereign's control, no very effectual check can be provided upon rash or upon oppressive proceedings of the monarch.

It thus appears that all pure forms of government are liable to this serious objection. As long as men are clothed with human infirmities, they in whose hands power is placed will be prone to abuse it; and if the power has some unavoidable restraints and limits, their effort will be to shake off the restraints and pass the limits as much as they can. The people in a pure Democracy will be disposed to carry all before them, yielding to the voice of the greater number, who may often be the most unsafe guides. The Patrician body in a pure Aristocracy will be disposed to domineer over the people, and by degrees to confine their government to a few of their own body. The Sovereign in a Pure Monarchy will be disposed to trample upon the natural rights of the community, and disregard the interests of the many, in favour of his own or his family's advantage. All the contrivances which are resorted to in each of these governments, in order to mitigate the violence of the ruling power, though very useful, indeed necessary, in order to make the system continue existing and working, are nevertheless very far from sufficient to produce the desired effect of tempering and regulating the action of the system. All of them are make-shifts rather than perfect. All of them have the radical defect of deriving their origin from the supreme governing power which they are designed to curb, or at least to mitigate in its operation, and of depending for their continuance upon the will and pleasure of that power.

This necessary defect in all the balances, and checks, and regulations which can be devised for a pure form of polity, is the true origin of Mixed government. Let us take one instance to illustrate this position practically. The device of requiring two legislative bodies to concur in making any law is efficacious in proportion to the diversity between those bodies. If both proceed from the people whose power and will the double consent is intended to temper or control, this never can be effected com-

pletely, however different the constitution of the two may be. But if one body derives its existence from the people, being a portion or a representative of the people, and the other is neither appointed by the people, nor accountable to the people, but formed of a class wholly removed beyond the popular control, a very effectual check will be afforded; and, besides, what is of infinite moment, every measure will be thoroughly discussed before it can be adopted.

A variety of examples may easily be given of the practical benefits which result from such a diversity. I well remember a remarkable one in the year 1834. The popular party, having also the government on its side, was more powerful in the English House of Commons than it ever had been before, or is ever likely again to be, because the Reform recently effected in the representation had given a prodigious majority at the general election to the party of our administration who had effected the great change. As might be expected, this popular majority in Parliament, backed by the people out of doors, were disposed to carry things with a very high hand. Two bills were sent up from the House of Commons to the Lords, both manifestly passed without due deliberation. By one it was provided that a single vote in any future House, however constituted, elected under whatever temporary influence of the Patrician or Monarchical party of the Constitution, or a vote taken by surprise even in a House differently constituted, might have disfranchised any of the great boroughs recently allowed to choose representatives. For only a single House of Commons' vote of Guilty was required on a charge of general corruption, and then the Lords were not very likely to prevent the borough's disfranchisement. As soon as I saw what had been done, I appealed to the leaders of the opposition, then so powerful in our House, and I found the Duke of Wellington, Lord Ellenborough, and others fully prepared to stop with me a bill of such frightful tendency, whatever might be the leaning of their own inclinations. The Duke proposed a plan of a kind most admirably adapted to form a substitute for this most crude and reprehensible scheme; he asked my help in digesting it fully; together we framed amendments on the Bill sent up; or rather we framed a wholly new Bill; we had it fully discussed in a select Committee; we obtained the unanimous assent of the Lords to it after the Committee had in one or two particulars improved it; and we sent it back thus changed to the Commons. No objection was made to our Bill, except that the changes were too great to be adopted as amendments, and the further consideration of the subject was postponed to another session. But had the Commons been humoured in their scheme, had the Lords been only a second division or section of the Commons, a chamber similarly chosen and similarly responsible, no one now

doubts that a law would have been passed shaking to its very foundations the whole representative constitution of the country.

Immediately after appeared another Bill, hastily and without any dissentient voice passed by the Commons, and which was well calculated to show how likely the former measure was to have been used by that body for the purpose of disfranchising far and wide. Bribery had been practised at a Warwick Election, and the Commons passed a Bill for all but disfranchising that Borough; the adjoining hundreds were to be let in. The case was in the Lords examined as if it had been a cause at *Nisi Prius*; and I sat, with the aid of the Lord Chief Justice and others, exactly as if I had been trying a question between parties in Westminster Hall. We found that all manner of vague and hearsay evidence had been taken in the Committee of the Commons; and that the utmost the Counsel for the Bill contended they had proved in our House, where the rules of evidence were known and enforced, was that about 30 out of 1250 voters had taken bribes. The very Peer who had charge of the Bill candidly admitted that it was preposterous to ask for any measure against the Borough upon a case like this. But the Commons had never paused or doubted, led away by mere clamour.

In the course of the same session—indeed in the same month—came a third Bill from the Commons, containing many important improvements upon the law respecting prosecutions; but containing likewise, from an oversight, an enactment which would have suspended the whole criminal jurisdiction from the first of August next ensuing, rendering illegal the proceedings of all the Sessions in the country. The moment I saw this clause in the Bill I of course struck it out, as was my duty, and the Bill went back to the Commons in an unexceptionable shape. The pride of the popular body was offended, and the Bill was thrown out, merely because it was made possible to pass it without overthrowing the whole criminal jurisdiction in the kingdom. The country thus lost the benefit for a whole year of a very useful act; but it escaped, and escaped through the House of Lords, a measure the most absurd, and which would have proved the most calamitous that had ever been adopted touching the law of the land.

Now in all these cases, and their number might be multiplied indefinitely, the safety of the country depended entirely upon the Lords being a perfectly different body from the Commons. Had the two Houses been similarly constructed, and similarly accountable, the only effect of a second discussion would have been a somewhat longer delay in passing the pernicious acts, a delay that would have afforded no kind of security that one chamber would take a different view from the other and correct its gross blunders—any more than a different view had been taken and those blunders corrected in the later stages of the bills while passing through the Lower House.

These facts are of importance in an historical point of view ; but they are here introduced as illustrating very clearly the respective tendencies of Pure and of Mixed government. I do not believe that there was a single member of either House of Parliament who, in 1834, had the least conception that had the constitution of both been the same, each being a purely popular body, those Bills would have received any effectual opposition even in the provisions which were most plainly objectionable, and which ensured their unanimous rejection by all parties in the Upper House. I am equally sure that there was not a member of the House of Commons through which all these provisions had passed without any opposition, who would not have bitterly repented having given his consent if they had unfortunately become Laws. But thus the mischief would have been done. The moment, indeed, that the worst of them began to work, Parliament must have been reassembled, and the Standing Orders suspended in order to repeal it. But beside the disgrace and contempt which this would have brought upon legislation, and which would have operated in future to prevent, or at least to delay, the adoption of many a good and wholesome measure, some of these bad provisions would have remained upon the statute book, and might have come into operation at a time when a sudden repeal could not have been effected. Thus the Disfranchisement Bill might not have been got rid of until some of the largest cities in the kingdom had been deprived of representatives, and a new Reform Bill might hereafter have been wanted to readmit them within the pale of the constitution.

The natural limits of Mixed government have unavoidably been treated of incidentally in the examination of the three simple or pure kinds of polity. It is that constitution into which more than one of the principles enter, and in which the supreme power is lodged in more than one functionary or body, each being entirely independent of the other, and each being both irremovable by, and unaccountable to, any authority whatever.

Thus if there be a Sovereign and a Patrician body, the government being vested in the hands of both, that is, certain functions requiring their joint consent, or some functions of supreme power being performed by one, and some by the other, the monarchy is Mixed. So it would be even if the Sovereign could admit members of the Patrician body, provided they were for life, or if the Patrician body elected the Sovereign, provided he was irremovable. The Polish government, sometimes called a Republic, sometimes an Elective Monarchy, was of this description ; it was, properly speaking, a Mixed Aristocracy. The Hungarian government is a Mixed Aristocracy, in which the Sovereign is not elective, but hereditary.¹ The ancient republic of Sparta was a Mixed Aristocracy, though not of the same kind, for the Sovereign, or rather the two Sovereigns,

¹ See our *Political Philosophy*, Part II., Chap. II.

at Sparta, were hereditary. Carthage appears, like Rome after the first ages of the Commonwealth, to have had a Mixed Aristocracy of a very different kind, or, more properly speaking, a Mixed Democracy; for there was a Patrician body from whom the Senate was chosen, probably by the people, as Aristotle condemns the system for leaning too much to the popular side. The qualification, however, of wealth as well as birth being required both for the *Suffetes*, or chief magistrates, and the Senate, and the general or popular assembly only being appealed to when those differed among themselves, as the whole legislation, and the most important executive functions also, were entrusted to the Senate's hands in the first instance, their power made the constitution a Mixed Aristocracy.

In modern times, however, the most frequent combination has been that of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy; a kind of union which the ancients appear to have considered impossible, sometimes treating it as the mere romantic speculation of political dreamers. Thus Tacitus, after saying that all nations are either governed by the people, the patricians, or a sovereign, adds that a kind of constitution, formed out of a choice or combination of these, is more easily praised than realized, and if realized, he says, it never can be of long duration.¹ Cicero gives the clearest opinion in its favour, without pronouncing it to be a chimerical scheme: "I hold," he says, "that government to be the best which is composed of the regal, patrician, and popular powers moderately blended together."² It may, however, be admitted that in ancient times, when there was no means of the people exercising their power, or share of the supreme power, without a direct interference in each act of government, that is to say, before the principle of representation was discovered, the difficulty of maintaining a Mixed Government, in which the people should form a portion, must have been all but insurmountable.

1. The foundation of this, as of every other form of Mixed Government, is the absolute independence of each order in the state. If the sovereign, like the Roman consuls and Carthaginian *suffetes*, held his high office for a limited period only, and were then displaced at the pleasure either of the patricians or the people; if the select or privileged order held its patrician rank at either the sovereign's or the people's pleasure; if either the sovereign or the patricians could interfere with the popular assembly, influence directly the choice of its members, in the case of a representative system, or influence the deliberations of the popular

¹ Cunctas nationes et urbes, populus aut primores aut singuli regunt. Delecta ex his et constituta reipublice forma laudari facilius quam evenire; vel si evenit haud diuturna esse potest.—Ann., lib. iv.

² Statuo esse optime constitutam rempublicam quæ ex tribus generibus illis, regali, optimo (quæ optimatum ?) et populari, modice confusa.—De Rep.

body, representative or other, which exercised the people's part of the administration,—in neither case would the government be Mixed of the three primary kinds, but in the first case it would be either a Mixed Aristocracy, or a Mixed Democracy; in the second case it would be a Mixed Democratic Monarchy, or a Mixed Monarchical Democracy; in the third case it would be either a Mixed Monarchical Aristocracy, or a Mixed Aristocratic Monarchy.

It would not be affirming too much, or refining too much, to regard the British Constitution, before 1832, as rather partaking more of an Aristocratic Monarchy, than the triple combination for which its admirers claimed credit. Neither is it very easy to regard the present Constitution of France as having a sufficient aristocratic mixture to deserve that character. The want of influence and wealth in the nobility and their legislative functions not being hereditary, hardly gives sufficient scope to the aristocratic principle.

2. Not only it is essential to a Mixed Government, that the different estates should be independent of one another, and each be independent of the powers to which the others are accountable; it is another essential requisite that each should be equally required to concur in every legislative act. If any one, or any two where there are three estates, could make laws to bind the whole; if the majority of the estates could bind the minority, instead of all being required to concur in every act of legislation, the government would only be Mixed in name. Thus, if in England the King and Lords could legislate to bind the people, the Commons would only have a nominal power. So if the Lords and Commons could bind the Crown, the Sovereign would be only nominal; and though with us he hardly ever exercises his negative, yet he effectually does the same thing by having the choice of his ministers, the selection of his servants among all those individuals of the people in whom the two Houses will confide, beside having great direct influence over the members of both Houses by his patronage and by his power of creating Peers.

3. The necessity of the several estates being each supreme and independent, and each required to concur in all important proceedings, is confined to acts of the supreme or legislative authority. If the Crown, for example, could interfere in any minor acts of the people or the nobles, as by nominating to certain places connected with popular meetings, the returning officer for instance in elections, or even the presiding officer in the patrician assembly, it would not cease to be, most strictly speaking, a Mixed Monarchy. So, too, the different estates may exercise important functions independent of each other, and so far from the government ceasing to be Mixed, it would be the better as a Mixed Government for the distribution. No one regards the executive functions of the

sovereign as any deviation from the Mixed Polity, although neither the nobles nor the people can directly interfere with them. Our monarchy and that of the French is all the better as a Mixed Monarchy, because neither peers nor deputies can ever interfere with the command of the army, or the appointment of ambassadors or of judges; and because the peers can only exercise judicial authority, and the commons or deputies can only impeach and not try public delinquents.

4. But in all these instances of separate powers being lodged in the several estates or orders, it is the nature of the Mixed polity, and flows directly from the combined operation of the parts, that one should in extreme cases act upon the other, even so as to impose a restraint upon each other in the exercise of their separate and independent functions. Thus, although the sovereign alone can appoint the judges, the ministers, the commanders of the forces, either House may censure a bad appointment; both together may cause the removal of a bad judge; and, one accusing, the other may try and convict a bad minister or commander. In all these cases the strict constitutional law requires that the three estates should concur; because, unless the crown chooses to make the removal of a judge it does not follow from the joint address of the Houses against him, the statute only empowering, and not requiring, that removal upon such an address. So, though a pardon cannot be (by statute) pleaded in bar of an impeachment by the Commons, the crown must agree not to pardon before the sentence—the joint sentence—of the two Houses can be carried into effect. As for the censure on a minister, or address of one or both Houses to remove him, strictly speaking the crown is not bound by it. But in all such cases the great power possessed by the Houses, especially by the Commons, renders the crown's yielding to their desire a matter of course. Indeed, if only the Commons take their line, and the Lords join with the Sovereign against them, an appeal to the people by a dissolution is the resource of the Constitution, and if this ends in the return of a parliament similarly resolved, the Crown and the Peers, almost always, must submit. However, in all the ordinary cases, this mutual interference of the estates with each other's separate and independent functions is not the course of the constitution. It is a power always existing, but rarely acting; it is there, but is only called into exercise when an occasion arises that requires it,—an occasion that renders a check or balance necessary to regulate the movements of the whole machine, and prevent the excessive force of any one power from deranging or destroying it. They are like the more ingenious and refined contrivances of mechanical skill, which being only designed to prevent mischief and restore equilibrium, are quiescent until the occasion arises when their action is required, and having discharged their appointed duty, become again inactive when the remedial operation has been performed.

The origin of the simple forms of government we have found always to be lost in obscurity, because those constitutions have been first established in the earliest ages. The Mixed governments have seldom been the earliest under which men lived, and we can therefore more frequently trace their origin. They have sometimes arisen from acts of violence committed by one power in the state encroaching upon all others in a manner not to be borne, and thus rousing a resistance which either entirely changed the political system or introduced into it some checks calculated to prevent a repetition of the wrongs that had been suffered. But the more frequent origin of Mixed government has been the gradual rise of one branch of the community into an importance that did not originally belong to it, and its consequently obtaining a share of the supreme power. As the anxiety to obtain this on the one part before the influence which engendered it was completely established, would make the order rising into importance satisfied with a portion of the supreme power, and as those in possession would generally be disposed to yield a portion of the governing power, rather than risk the loss of the whole, a combined government would thus naturally arise in the State, and continue for a greater or less time to maintain itself, according as the shares of power given to the parties were well or ill adjusted, and the joint action was well or ill adapted to the circumstances of the community. Sometimes attempts would be made by one party to regain the exclusive influence which it had lost; sometimes the other party would seek to extend its power and govern exclusively in its turn. If the machine were ill-adjusted, new changes might take place, with more or less violence, to produce a better adaptation of its different parts to each other's action, and of the whole movement to the situation of the country; and in examples of all these changes, by sudden revolution or by gradual accommodation, or by both acting at different times in the same system, the history of mixed governments in both ancient and modern times abounds.

The Spartan constitution could hardly be called mixed. To the anarchy of the disjointed government under the two kings prior to Lycurgus, succeeded a constitution by him modelled on that of Crete, and which was nearly a pure Aristocracy. It was not till above a century after his decease that the Ephoral power became any protection to the people; and in a very short time the Ephori became altogether identified with the Aristocratic body, so as to eradicate whatever mixture of Democracy had for some years been introduced.¹

The Roman government under the kings appears to have been a Mixed Monarchy or Aristocracy, in which the patrician body was gradually overpowered by the king. When, with the aid of the people, it had effected a revolution, expelling the kings, the Aris-

¹ *Political Philosophy*, Part II., Chap. xv.

tocracy gained an uncontrolled ascendancy, and became pure. The popular power increasing with the numbers and the wealth of the people, gradually undermined the Aristocracy, and established for some time a Democratic Commonwealth. But the patricians soon regained a portion of their influence, and the government was a Mixed Aristocracy until the tyranny of the patricians, the corruption of the plebeians, and the conflicts of factions after a scene of unparalleled violence and cruelty, prepared the way for a pure and absolute despotism.¹

It would be a great abuse of terms to call the Venetian a Mixed Aristocracy, because of the Doge being appointed for life ; for he had no real share in the legislative power or the important administrative functions. That singular government continued for six centuries in the form into which it was finally moulded. But at a much earlier period there was a Mixed government established at Venice, in consequence of the ruinous contests carried on by the different islets of which the state was composed,—contests which threatened the entire conquest of the whole by the Slavonians and the Lombards, the latter attacking by land, the former by sea. Under the pressure of this exigency an executive officer, the Doge or Duke, was introduced into the system, and with great administrative power and extensive patronage ; but as the general or popular assembly retained the legislative power in its hands beside electing the Doge, the government might now be regarded as Mixed. The increased power of the Doge, from foreign conquest, occasioned frequent struggles between that magistrate and the people at whose head the nobles placed themselves. But, generally speaking, the Doge prevailed, because no permanent measure was adopted to restrain his power, although the struggles of the parties frequently led to his violent death. After the lapse of nearly two centuries and a half (1030) a check was at length contrived, and the government became more really mixed than it ever had been, in consequence of a body being created whose concurrence with the chief magistrate was required to legalize his acts. For about a century and a half the government continued to be really of a Mixed form, when the Aristocracy was established, which continued for six centuries without any change to rule the Republic.

In Genoa the aristocracy was not so long established, nor so uninterrupted in its continuance. But nothing like a Mixed Government was ever established. There were frequent alternations of aristocratic or oligarchical tyranny and mob government, each faction wreaking its vengeance on its adversaries when it obtained the advantage. But for the most part the people were subjected, and the patricians ruled the state.²

Of the other Italian Commonwealths the history has been gener-

¹ *Political Philosophy*, Part II., Chap. XI. XII. XIII.

² *Ibid.*, Part II., Chap. XXIV.

ally alike; first a pure Aristocracy; then a mixture of Democratic influence as the people's wealth increased; then for a while a subjugation of the Patricians to the burghers; followed by an entirely Aristocratic constitution, which ended in purely Monarchical Government.¹

The United Provinces have undergone several revolutions, but the most important change was that which gradually took place in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and converted a Democratic Government, slightly mingled with Monarchical institutions, into a Burgher Aristocracy. The House of Nassau has more than once been reduced for several years to a state of nullity in the government; but the favour of that illustrious family with the people has always been sufficient in the long-run to retain its power, and keep the government mixed. William III. was enabled, by his great success in establishing our free government and obtaining the crown of this kingdom, to place the Mixed Constitution of his own country upon a more stable foundation; and since that period it has, with little interruption, formed a monarchy, really of a Mixed kind, and, since the overthrow of the French power, a Mixed or Limited Monarchy in name as well as in substance.

The government of France was never really of a Mixed kind till the results of the Revolution in 1789 established a Limited Monarchy, which the Republic displaced, but which was afterwards restored on Napoleon's downfall. The powers of the States-General and Parliaments were too ill defined to constitute a Mixed Monarchy before the reign of Louis XIII.—In Arragon the Cortes was of sufficient weight to constitute a Mixed Monarchy, from the expulsion of the Moors to the reign of Charles V.²—Perhaps we may give the same name to the Government of Sicily.³ But a really Mixed or Limited Monarchy in both Spain and Portugal has arisen out of the changes brought about by the French Revolution, and the wars which it occasioned.

We have seen, in the history of the Scandinavian governments,⁴ that the tyranny of the sovereign was succeeded by a more intolerable tyranny of the nobles, which made the constitution both of Sweden and Denmark only Mixed Monarchy in name, the sovereign's share of the supreme power being exceedingly inconsiderable, and the people's still more trifling, until by revolutionary movements, Denmark in 1661, and Sweden in 1772, but more effectually in 1789, became subject to absolute Monarchy.

The history of our own admirable Constitution will furnish many important illustrations of the steps by which a Government becomes Mixed, or rather by which, from being composed of two, it becomes

¹ *Political Philosophy*, Part II., Chaps XXV. XXVI. XXVII.

² *Ibid.*, Part I. Chap. xix.

³ *Ibid.*, Part I. Chap. xvii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Part I., Chap. xxi.

composed of the three powers. The Feudal Monarchy at first was more aristocratic than it afterwards became upon the conquest from the powerful operation of the Imperfect Federal Union. In the course of two centuries a beginning was made of introducing the popular power into the system; but it was not till the end of the fourteenth century that this change had been completely effected, and that the Mixed Monarchy can be said to have been fully established as we now find and now enjoy it.

CHAPTER XIX.

VIRTUES AND VICES OF MIXED GOVERNMENT.

Defects of checks in all pure Governments—Illustrations: Athens; Rome; Eastern Despotisms—Mixed Governments the only effectual check—Virtues of Mixed Government—Its checks and balances perfect—Secure full discussion—Protect Rights and Liberties—Maintain the Stability of the System—Alleged vices of Mixed Government.

The advantages of Mixed Government flow naturally from the imperfections that are always to be found even in the most finished form of pure government. We have thus been led incidentally to note many circumstances belonging to this branch of our subject; because, as often as we have considered the inconvenience of the pure form, and shewn how it was necessary to temper its principles, we have found that there was a radical defect in all the contrivances which could be resorted to for that purpose, and that nothing but a departure from the strict and rigorous system could provide checks and balances which would prove effectual. Now that departure was in truth the introduction of some other principle, or the mixture of some other form with the form under consideration.

The reason why these checks were not wholly to be relied on is plain. If the government must be kept in its perfect purity, all the checks must more or less partake of its fundamental principle; consequently, all of them must be liable to the same objection, and require modification or aid to reinforce them. But that could not be given without the introduction of something belonging to another form of government, some principle alien to the genius and spirit of the constitution in question. Thus, to take the example which we resorted to in the last chapter; if it is desired to check the rash and erroneous acts of a purely popular legislation, the utmost that we can do by means of devices not inconsistent with the purely democratic principle, is to frame rules of proceeding which occasion delay and give time for deliberation. But the same power which formed these rules may abrogate or suspend them; and the occasions on which they are most likely to be dispensed with are precisely those when excited

passions render their controlling operation the most necessary to prevent mischief. If the House of Commons, or Chamber of Deputies, were only restrained by their Standing Orders, how often would these be suspended when they stood between those Assemblies and the object of their eager desire? So if another Chamber, or another House, were added to those several bodies, and its assent also were required to the measure the same eager desire to pass it would operate in that second body, if its constitution were as popular as the structure of the former. Nothing but another origin, or other duration, or other materials, can secure the checks required upon the first body's proceedings, and this is making the Government Mixed. If the only difference were, as in America, a higher qualification in the members, or a longer duration of their commission, unless they held their places for life, no effectual check would be obtained from them; and even that would be of very inferior efficacy to the restraint imposed by a totally different order of men, as a hereditary privileged class, or an executive magistrate holding his office by inheritance or chosen for life.

Thus it was clear, when we examined the checks provided by the Athenian constitution, that they were with difficulty discernible; that they were very important, compared with an absolute Democracy, which, without any such contrivances, could hardly continue its existence; but that they were so precarious as to be in the hands of the sovereign people, at whose mercy, after all, the government necessarily was; and, accordingly, many acts of gross injustice to individuals, and of most fatal rashness to the state, were very frequently done, notwithstanding all the checks which we had occasion to describe (See *ante*, Chap. xiii.). To take but one instance in order to satisfy ourselves how exceedingly precarious all such checks were. The rule was, not to let any one, under pain of death, propose the repeal of certain fundamental laws. But when any repeal became popular, the orator appeared with a halter about his neck in the general assembly and made the proposition with the applause of the meeting; thus at once testifying to the existence of the law, to his sense of its stern rigour, and to his confidence in its utter inefficiency. So at Rome, an Augur, one of a numerous college, could any day, by pronouncing the solemn word "*alium*" (that is, "*ad alium diem*") cause the postponement of a question in which the people took the greatest interest. Yet who can doubt that the multitude had power to deter such priests on many an occasion which demanded their interposition all the more that the vehemence of the popular feeling was the stronger and more overpowering? So a slight check is provided to the caprices and cruelty of an Eastern despot, by the delegation of his powers in order to their being effectually administered, as well as by the chances of popular violence. Yet that very decision

and delegation strengthens the tyrant's hands; he often uses it to domineer with the more searching violence; and his fear of resistance constantly produces acts of needless cruelty, in order to extinguish by terror all the sparks that might kindle into a flame.

We thus perceive that the only effectual checks and balances in any system of polity are those which depend upon the introduction of different kinds of power. The separate and independent existence of different estates or authorities, each required to concur in all acts, each free to act as it pleases, and as its separate interests prompt, each armed with some independent power of resistance to the others, is the only effectual method of preventing one body in the government, or one class of the community, from ruling uncontrolled, subjecting all the rest, and mismanaging the public affairs.

All the advantages, then, which have in any part of this work been shown to arise from checks and balances in the system of government, are peculiarly the produce of that combination of different powers and principles in which a Mixed government consists; and it becomes unnecessary to discuss these minutely here, after the consideration which has already been repeatedly bestowed upon them. But it may be well to state that the three great advantages which a Mixed government possesses over every other, are its protecting the public interest from the risk of rash, ill-concerted councils, its securing the freedom and the rights of all classes in the community, and its maintaining the stability of the political system.

1. The prevention of rash counsels is most surely obtained from the conflict, or rather the mutual counter-action, of different independent powers in one system. If one party is to detail, however ably, however fairly, before a judge the whole merits of any case, unopposed, we know full well how many views of the subject, how many arguments, and how many facts, will escape his best attention. But if two, less able, incomparably less candid, appear before the judge, nay each as unfair and as violent in his statements as possible, their contention will leave no point unsifted, and the whole matter will soon be ripe for safe decision. In the former instance, the judge will hesitate and pause, fear to go wrong, falter in doing right; and after his utmost care he will never be quite sure that he has avoided error. In the latter instance he will have no anxiety at all, unless the facts are necessarily obscure, and the principles ill ascertained by the law, and he will generally give a speedy, a complete, and a correct decision. In like manner no better safeguard can be devised against an unreflecting course of proceeding than the consecutive discussion of each measure by bodies which have different, often conflicting, interests, and which will unavoidably take very different views of the same question. Haste, rashness, is with certainty thus excluded; error, misdecision, becomes exceedingly unlikely.

2. The effect of mixed government in protecting the rights and liberties of all classes is equally striking, and if possible more important. In truth there can be no other safe and secure protection for the whole community. If the Sovereign is absolute, there is no resource but resistance; and long before public wrongs have ripened into the general desire of redress which makes resistance safe or even justifiable, extreme oppression may have been exercised and great hardships endured. An Aristocracy is not so fatal to liberty or so fruitful of wrong in one respect, that the mutual jealousy of the patricians and the parties which are the natural produce of this soil afford some protection to the people at large. But we have seen how oppressive the government of a select body may be in other respects; how it may even be worse to bear than the absolute dominion of one. In a Democracy, there is no security for the party whose rights are grudged and whose influence is dreaded by the ruling power; the tyranny and intolerance of the majority has been already fully described, and it has been found perhaps the worst of all (*ante*, Chap. xv.). All the checks provided in any one of these three constituted out of its own materials alone, are unavailing to make every one's rights secure, and to provide for each class a safeguard against the too great power of the preponderating party. But when there are opposing or conflicting interests, no one body in the state can set the law at defiance with so great facility as when all power is centered in one description of the community. A natural jealousy arises of each other when the supreme power is lodged not in one but in several estates or orders; and hence not only does it become difficult for one of these to encroach upon the rights of the other, but neither is likely to permit such an encroachment upon a third party,—such as a third estate were there are three, or a portion of either where there are two. If an Aristocracy were disposed to maltreat a portion of the patrician body in a government composed of two branches, the representatives of the people being one, the latter would assuredly take the part of the oppressed class of patricians. So the sovereign, in a state where there was only a popular body besides, would not suffer a measure to pass which should be levelled at the just rights of any part of the people. But the most perfect Mixed government is that which consists of a body representing each class,—the people by their own deputies, the men of rank and wealth by the aristocratic chamber, and the executive departments of the State, military and civil, by the sovereign. Let any subject be aggrieved by the popular deputies, the aristocratic body or the crown will seek to have him righted. Let any executive officer be aggrieved by the patrician body, the popular assembly will join the crown in obtaining redress for him. Let any just privilege of rank and station be invaded by the Crown, the people's deputies will join the Aristocratic body in defending

it; and if the nobles were to be oppressed by the people, they would find a resource in the sovereign against this oppression.

3. The stability of the mixed system of polity is evidently in much less hazard from internal commotion than that of any pure government whatever. Every thing which tends to secure men's rights and prevent injustice is a guarantee of internal peace, because it removes the most powerful cause of violent change—unredressed grievances. Moreover, when each class of the community is represented effectually in the legislature of a country, a safety-valve, as it were, is provided, by which any dangerous spirit of discontent may escape. A popular representation alone is indeed an excellent contrivance for this purpose; but there may be no representation of the minority; or some classes, as men of rank and wealth, may be imperfectly represented, and at any rate the majority of a single body is supreme. When a second body is provided, independent of the popular deputies, the chances of serious discontents are diminished, in proportion as all whom the latter discontent and vex find their protectors without the necessity of recourse to any violent measures. Besides, when all the stability of any government depends upon the security of a single power in the state, the system rests upon a much narrower basis than when several bodies share the supreme power. The popular deputies form no doubt the most secure, because the broadest foundation for the government; but suppose a powerful faction, discontented with the proceedings, and impatient of the oppressions of that popular body, should intrigue with a foreign power, or with a successful commander favoured by this dissatisfied minority, how much less securely would such a system be enabled to meet the peril, than if there were an aristocratic body to resist these consequences of the popular domination, if it had failed to prevent that oppression itself? That the existence of three branches affords a still safer refuge from the violence which would overthrow one is equally obvious. In fact, the great hazard of all revolutionary movements is the operation of some sudden and violent impulse. The action of three co-ordinate bodies, beside removing the temptation from all classes to act against the established government, resists the change when it is attempted, and gives time for the machine to right from the shock.

The vices of the system, which has so many and such precious virtues, lie within a narrow compass indeed. It may be charged with a tendency to multiply parties, by giving to every class of men a protection, and thus showing that each faction may make itself powerful in the administration of affairs. But experience has shown the tendency of parties to multiply in both aristocratic and popular governments of a pure form. We may be told that the establishment of more orders than one tends to impair the vigour of the administration. But when against this is set the evil of rashness, to

which the most pure and vigorous government must needs be exposed, because of there being no check upon its movements, a sufficient reason is given for preferring that safety, which in the long run will even prove an increase of all useful vigour. We prefer the engine which in twenty-four years cannot run the hazard of exploding, to that which, working much more rapidly, may be blown up in twenty-four hours.—If it be said, and this is the common ground of complaint, that the people's interest requires an unobstructed progress, which the counterpoise of a sovereign or of a privileged class impedes, and that the good of the many is thus sacrificed to the benefit or to the prejudices of one or of a few—the answer is, that without denying the possible occurrence of cases in which this high price may be paid for the benefits of a Mixed Constitution, yet those constantly enjoyed benefits, of equal rights, good government, and security against wide spreading revolution, are well purchased by the payment of that occasional price. It may be added, that the virtues or vices of any government are to be estimated, not by taking an account of its working for a few years, but on the long run, and that the security of this Mixed System in the long run will conduce more to the progress of the people's interests, than a removal of all the obstruction which the checks and balances can create.

CHAPTER XX.

ULTIMATE TENDENCY OF MIXED GOVERNMENT.

Ultimate destiny of all Governments the same—Universal progress towards Popular Power—General Improvement in Men's Condition and Habits—African Despotisms—Oriental—Connexion between Improvement and Change—Mitigation of Absolute Governments: East; Prussia; Russia—Effects of Revolution on Despotisms—General interest in extension of popular Rights—Popular Improvement makes Checks less necessary—Illustrations from English History—People's Rights derived from their Power—Advance of Power with Improvement—Prophetic View of an improved Age—Upper Classes and Property safe—Representation safe—Religion safe—Double Legislation safe—Hereditary Executive less certain to be maintained.

It is now fit that we consider the tendency of all Mixed Government, with a view to ascertain whether there be any qualities inherent in its nature which tend to prevent change from ever taking place in its structure, or whether its composition is only such as to ward off that change, and preserve longer than any other form of government is likely to preserve its unaltered existence. We have observed the reasons which give Mixed Governments a much better chance of escaping violent convulsion, and the revolutions that such accidents occasion. But it does not follow that there may not be a gradual progress towards change which cannot be prevented. Everything in this discussion must depend upon the materials of which the Mixed Government is composed, so far as regards the first

change; but we shall presently find, that ultimately the same alteration is likely to be undergone by all governments, and that in the end all will probably reach the same goal, although they may have started from points at very different distances from it, and gain it by very different routes.

The inevitable tendency of every political system must be towards giving an increased power to the bulk of the people. So long as the human race is by nature fitted for improvement, no political circumstances can wholly prevent men from making some progress in bettering their condition and in extending their knowledge. In some of the degrading and always sanguinary despotisms of savage countries, the motion of society may be so slow as hardly to be perceptible. We have accounts from travellers of nations in the interior of Africa, subject to tyrants whose whole existence seems to be a series of bloody murders. Nevertheless it cannot be denied, that this dreadful state of things has been in great part produced by the execrable slave traffic, which civilized and Christian men for so many ages have driven upon the coasts of that vast and benighted continent. If the same habits of mutual depredation, and of spilling each other's blood, which now make part of their existence, had distinguished those barbarous tribes a thousand years ago, the race must by this time have been extinguished. When the Slave Trade shall cease, we have reason to believe that even over the African desert the light of religion and of science will at length dawn, and the only exception be removed to the general rule, that human society is everywhere proceeding with a motion more or less rapid towards general improvement.

In the east, where the systems of polity are civilized, though the nature of the government is such as to keep the people in great ignorance, a perceptible progress is making. The trade of the active and industrious Europeans can nowhere be entirely excluded; intercourse with foreigners is necessarily maintained; and even in China itself, hitherto the most unchanged of all empires, the communication of more light seems finally to have become inevitable from the events of late years.

It is quite impossible that in any government, however despotically framed, the sciences, the arts, the learning, the moral and political knowledge of the people should increase, and with these their comforts, their possessions, and their enjoyments, without the wish being communicated to them of bettering their condition politically; for they must, independent of all the natural desire which men have for power and distinction, learn that they suffer many unnecessary risks, are exposed to many losses, and encounter many obstructions and inconveniencies in their pursuits, from which they would be protected were the frame of the government varied under which they live. To imagine that if Turkey were completely civilized, and men possessed both the wealth and the knowledge that bless

Western Europe even under its most absolute monarchies, a bashaw could be sent into any province to enrich himself by plunder and confiscation, securing impunity by suffering the common master to pillage him in his turn, is wholly absurd. The two things could not co-exist in the same system; the outrage never would be attempted, or if attempted, would not be endured. It is not going too far to affirm that the sultan, it is certain that the bashaw of Egypt, rules by himself and his officers very differently from the Tamerlanes and the Bajazets of a former age. Compare the mild and enlightened reign of the present Prussian sovereign with that of his predecessors a century ago, and you will be satisfied that, however little the form of that great military monarchy may have been changed, no prince royal could now be called forth to see his favourite strangled before his window for the gratification of a tyrannical father's splenetic humour. No Baron Trenck could be immured in a dungeon for twenty years to expiate the misfortune of having found favour in the eyes of a princess. Russia is as despotically governed as any European prince could now venture to rule his people; yet there is no possibility of a czar beheading his mutinous guards with his own hand, or of a prime minister being sent in the night to Siberia, with his family, because a new cabinet had been called into office.

The first step in the general and inevitable change has been made in all these countries. The government generally remains the same, but the exercise of absolute power is tempered and restrained by the improved spirit of the age, by the force of public opinion abroad, as well as at home, and above all, by the great improvement in the knowledge, manners, and character of the people over whom those governments are established.

But this improvement cannot continue, much less can it go on advancing, without bringing home to every man's mind the sense of what is left unaccomplished; the great want of security for the continuance of what has been gained; the abundant field which there is for acquiring much more. All men's wishes, therefore, are unavoidably pointed towards one object – the obtaining a legal right to that relaxation of absolute power which they always have gotten, but only as it were by a kind of happy accident, in part owing to the personal character of the sovereigns themselves. Let it be added, that these sovereigns, partially in advancement of their age, must generally find it their interest to give more, and to secure the people by better institutions, because this is in truth securing themselves. Nothing is less stable than despotic power; of this we see innumerable proofs in the pages of history. The convulsions to which despotisms are subject do not often change the government; but they change the person, the family, the dynasty, and that is as bad for the individual rulers as any revolution. Besides, all princes have now learnt that some portion of popular

rights being conceded, the increase of public wealth irresistibly follows, and that no country can be made available to the financial supply of its governors, without the form of a popular constitution.

This is the next step in the political progress of all countries, even of those subject to the sway of absolute princes. But of course these monarchs, who might be willing enough to allow certain improvements in the institutions of their country, would be desirous to keep the government of the Mixed form, which secures to themselves an ample power, only so far mitigated in its exercise by the grant of popular rights as to augment their security and financial resources. They would strive, therefore, to secure the government from any further change; and the aristocracy, their ally generally in this conservative plan, would join in seeking to prevent any new acquisition of the people. The nature of Mixed Government, as we have seen (Chap. XIX.), is well calculated to further this design; and no doubt such a government tends longer than any other, in all ordinary circumstances, to preserve itself without material change, in consequence of its different branches pulling different ways, and resisting any usurpation of either one or the other, or even of any combination between two. The general good, too, as well as the interest and the pleasure of the sovereign and his patrician allies, requires, as society is at present constituted, this permanent stability of the Mixed Government. We have seen how absolutely necessary it is that checks and balances should be provided to regulate the movements of popular government; how fatal the mischief would be of the people ruling uncontrolled.

But the whole reasoning which proved the necessity of such contrivances, the whole foundation of the preference given to Mixed Government by the result of our inquiries, consisted of one position—the incapacity of the people to govern themselves. Remove this incapacity, and that reasoning fails, that reasoning no longer can sustain the conclusion to which it conducted us. The whole question, therefore, is whether or not the people are ever likely to improve themselves so much as to be quite capable of self-government. Until that happy time arrives, their best interests, their only safety, are bound up with a government judiciously mixed, one in which, as Cicero says, the simple elements of political power are wisely and moderately blended. When men have become so conversant with state affairs, not the niceties and details, but the general principles of national polity, so familiar with those things which constitute their own true interests, so intimately persuaded that their concerns, to be managed profitably for themselves, require to be conducted deliberately, calmly, honestly—no one can doubt that the conflicting and counteracting powers of a Mixed Government are no longer necessary; and that the infant people, become of full age, and perfect stature, and matured faculties, may safely, nay, advan-

tageously, be entrusted with the management of the people's own concerns. But it cannot be doubted, that when this state of things exists, and the people have become well qualified to govern the state, without any more control than they feel it for their own interest and their own convenience that they should have, they will obtain this full power. There is no authority in any state which is always on the increase except that of the people. They alone are constantly multiplying in their numbers; they alone are always increasing their wealth; they may not become more learned and more sagacious than the upper classes, but they are always improving their intellectual resources, always coming nearer and nearer to the best informed of their superiors in station. The indefinite increase of their accomplishments tends to lessen the distance between them and the wealthy few; tends not only to lessen the veneration with which the rude regard the refined, but to lessen the regret at being less wealthy, and to diminish in their eyes the importance of their physical privations. Hence an indomitable spirit of self-possession and independence, a habit of estimating men's worth according to their real and not their factitious superiority, a disposition to regard with respect only those qualities which the humblest may possess, and those acquirements which all may make. When such a state of things shall exist in any country, it is clear that the preponderance of the people must become far too great for all the rest of the community combined.

In order to try these positions, let us revert to the state of this country before the towns were admitted to send representatives to Parliament. They were summoned, without any doubt, for the purpose of making their wealth liable to contributions for the King's service. But if no such motive had led to their admission, a share of the government they must needs have obtained, either by fair means or by foul, in the course of half a century, devoted to the further improvement of their knowledge and their wealth. Who can suppose it possible that the whole government should have remained in the hands of the Sovereign and some forty or fifty barons with half as many prelates, if the number of the people had been increased to so many millions as we now reckon, and their information upon all subjects had been improved as we are supposing it to be in the case which has been put? Then the changes which have of late been effected in the Representation, and which have so greatly augmented the people's influence, were entirely caused by the growth of the popular numbers, and resources, and information. Those changes might have been postponed a few years, perhaps half a century longer; but they were altogether and they were unquestionably owing to the increase and the improvement of the people.

The people, then, originally as entirely excluded from all share in the legislature as they now are in Russia, or as they still are from

all direct share in the executive government, have by dint of their augmented power, obtained a large, perhaps an undue proportion of the legislative power. It is manifest that their further increase in numbers, wealth, and knowledge, must go on, and at an accelerated pace, while neither of the other orders of the state can improve their position in any material degree. It seems to follow, that the people will thus in time gain a material accession to the large share of power which they at present possess. If not, there can no reason be assigned for their ever having gained so much; they have only attained their present political position, their position in point of right, by such an increase of actual power of power in point of fact, as we are supposing, to go on still further augmenting.

It is however possible, and this is carefully to be considered, that this increase of real power may outstrip the improvement of the people, and anticipate the period when sufficient capacity of self-government would make it quite safe to trust them with the full management of their affairs. There could not be a greater evil, above all to themselves. That change which, gradually brought about, with full preparation and only effected when they were fit for it, would be safe and productive of neither shock nor fear, would prove utterly destructive of the best interests of society if suddenly wrought by violent means, through the impatience, the ignorance, or the profligacy of the people and their advisers. Against so disastrous a consummation it becomes the bounden duty of every wellwisher to his country, and, above all, every friend of the people themselves, earnestly to struggle, by all the means of reason and instruction, by all means of administrative vigour, nay of open and steady resistance, if the resources of argument and information should be exhausted in vain.

The reader of this chapter is, however, referred to the Preliminary Discourse, and to Part I., Chap. II., of our *Political Philosophy*, for a full explanation of the sense in which we are here taking popular Education and improvement, and for a statement of their probable effects in rendering safe the political change which, it is not doubtful, they are calculated to produce. He would commit a very great mistake who should imagine that we can easily picture to ourselves the feelings, the conduct, and, generally, the condition of the people, when enlightened by study and reflection, from anything that we now see around us. He would be equally led astray by his present impressions who should feel any great alarm at the prospect of more extended influence being communicated to a people well prepared for self-government, those impressions being derived from the present conduct of men half aware of their duties, and almost entirely ignorant of their true interests, men, perhaps, under the guidance of a few unprincipled leaders, in whose hands they are tools of mischief, unaccustomed, and indeed unable, to form their own opinions, or act upon their own views.

It would be a pleasing task, if it did not run the risk of being deemed too speculative and romantic, to pourtray in our imagination the happy condition of our humbler fellow citizens, and of the state which their labour and their virtue sustains, when instruction in all useful knowledge shall have rendered them fit safely and profitably to possess the share in their own government which God and nature designed to be their portion—to see in our mind's eye the time when the voice of party should be still and its hand powerless; when profligate leaders, albeit in a holy garb, could no more move the million from their sober, and honest, and steady purpose well understood, than they could disturb the moon from her course in the heavens; when no jealousy of higher station or more ample wealth, on the one part, should be encountered by supercilious disdain of plebeian merit, and alarm at plebeian encroachment on the other; when each class should feel intimately persuaded that its own advantage was bound up indissolubly with the profit of all other orders in the community, and each nation should desire for its own benefit the prosperity of all its neighbours; when no echo of foreign levy should interrupt our repose, no provision against domestic strife exhaust our resources, no civil broils ruffle the serene aspect of our horizon; when with general consent many of our most costly establishments could be with all safety given up as no longer wanted to inform or to guide our system; when graceless zealots should contend no more for useless forms of faith, nor political fanatics for forms of government; when devotion to the Creator should cease to be testified by discharity towards his creatures, and wretched abstract dogmas to obstruct the progress of all the light that most improves, refines, exalts our species. But it may be better to turn from a scene which can for many a long day only vex and tantalise those who are doomed yet to linger among other realities; and direct our attention towards one or two illustrations of the consequences which may result from a people, well prepared for the task, assuming a more complete control over state affairs.

And first we may observe, that some things must ever remain in their present state, what progress soever shall have been made in improvement by the people or their rulers. There will always be a great difference in wealth, which must of necessity be very unequally distributed. There will always be a great majority of the people whose time is chiefly devoted to laborious occupation. There will always, therefore, be a real distinction of ranks, and an artificial founded upon the Natural Aristocracy. The influence of the upper classes will probably gain as much from the intimate persuasion of the lower that their intellectual resources are greater from right cultivation, and from having more time at their command, as it can lose by the distance between the two orders being very materially diminished. Not to mention that the humblest classes will become aware of the general good requiring the property of

all to be held most sacred. Hence, far from any disposition growing up to pull down those upper classes, the conviction will become universal that there are certain functions which they are best fitted to perform, and that their continuing to direct the executive government and administer justice will best conduce to the good of the humblest person in the whole community. It is therefore quite certain, that if the popular change, of which we are contemplating the possibility, only takes place when its due season has arrived, there will be no risk of society being deranged by any inroad upon the present functions, any more than upon the possessions, of the patrician classes. Whatever advantages in either the one or the other respect they now enjoy at the expense, and unjustly at the expense, of the community at large, they must be content to abandon; no further sacrifice will be exacted from them. The general improvement of the people will assuredly remove all the objections which we found (Chap. xvi.) to the existence of a Religious establishment, and render it quite compatible with the most popular form of government. But, moreover, the grounds of the position there laid down, as to the necessity of a State Church, were all intimately connected with the people's ignorance and proneness to follow various teachers. The existence of a State Church may therefore become much less indispensable when they are so much improved as to remove those mischiefs and dangers which in that discussion we had occasion to contemplate.

The Representative principle will be quite secure. It rests upon grounds of absolute, of physical necessity. No improvement of the people can ever make it possible for their whole body to meet in public assemblies, or to rule a great state. All improvement in political knowledge will only impress them the more deeply with a sense of the inestimable value which belongs to the representative system. An universal right to concur in the exercise of its powers will of course be established; but far less disposition will be shown than at present to interfere with the conduct of those to whom the trust has been delegated.

That legislation by a single chamber should ever be willingly adopted by any people, how enlightened soever, nay rather the less likely is it to be adopted the more enlightened the people are. For the errors which a double discussion by bodies differently constituted and differently originating, is calculated to correct, are not errors of ignorance or of ordinary haste, but of the unavoidable imperfection which belongs to men, and their utter inability to see far before them; they must make up for this defect by thorough and searching inquiry, and this can never be secured unless bodies differently constituted successively examine each measure. No improvement can ever make the people more enlightened than the members of the Commons' House of Parliament were in 1834, when they passed the acts which have been adverted to in the Eighteenth

and Nineteenth chapters. A second chamber sure to view all subjects with other eyes is the only remedy it affords; the only means of preventing error.

Whether the necessity of an executive power, wholly independent of the people for its existence, may not become also apparent even in the state of things towards which we are pointing our eye, is another and a much more doubtful question. The expenses are enormous; the evils are manifold; the hazards are grievous; the necessity is very far from being equally manifest. If the people are in all respects capable of choosing their representatives, it may be conceived that they are also capable of selecting their chief magistrate, and towards a state of things which shall intrust them with this power, towards a Democratic, or at least a Mixed Democratic Republic, it may perhaps be admitted that human affairs tend in modern times. All the experiments which have hitherto been made of Republican government in old societies have begun at the wrong end. The people have been called to the difficult task of self-government without having served their apprenticeship by learning political science and practical wisdom. The failure of these trials has therefore been inevitable, and it has been complete. But it is very far indeed from proving that no old country can be governed democratically. The possibility of such a consummation is entirely dependent upon a progress having been made by the people, which they have indeed begun, but which it will require a long course of years to finish. In the present state of society an hereditary executive, however costly in some respects, however hazardous in others, is absolutely necessary; it is our only safeguard against heavier costs and more desperate hazards than any to which it exposes our Political System.

CHAPTER XXI.

RESERVED POWERS OF THE PEOPLE.

Connexion—Influence of the Press—Popular interference; its limits—Publicity through the Press—Proper and improper influence—Illustration—Twofold mischiefs from the Press—By private Speculators; by Factions—Anonymous writing—Motives of concealed Writers—Party—Twofold evils from abuse of the Press—Athenian Mob Government—Press has disarmed itself—Progress of knowledge has disarmed it—Duty of the People.

Application of principles to Public Meetings—Popular excesses—Illustration—French Revolution; England in 1795; in 1819—Irish Meetings—General principle—Errors of Mr. Canning on our Constitution—Illustrated from County Courts; Freemen; ancient right of voting.

People's share in Judicature—Athens; Rome; Modern Jury Trial—Three cases fitted for it—Its uses to the People—No admixture of evil in it.

Notwithstanding the surrender by the people of their share in the supreme power by the choice of representatives, there are cer-

tain Powers which must be Reserved to them from the necessity of the case and the nature of the thing. These are principally three in modern times : the influence of the Press ; the influence of Public Meetings ; and the influence of Juries in the administration of justice.

SECTION I.—*The Press.*

While the legislative power is confided to 'the popular representatives in whole or in part, according as the Democracy is pure or mixed, and while the executive power is intrusted either to hereditary or elective magistrates, there is an important influence, almost amounting to a direct power, exercised by the discussion of all public measures through the Press. This influence depends entirely upon the effects which such discussion produces upon public opinion, that is upon the minds of the people, by affecting whom it affects their representatives and their magistrates, sometimes exciting them to adopt measures for which the people feel exceedingly anxious, sometimes deterring them from pursuing courses to which the people feel exceedingly averse.

It must be confessed that this interference operates as an obstruction to the movements of the representative system. As far as it is effectual, it may be considered as a resumption of the delegated trust, a breaking in upon the discharge of the duties confided to the deputies. If a number of persons should employ any one to act for them as their advocate, and then prevent him from pursuing the course which his judgment pointed out as best for their interest, by meeting and passing resolutions against it, or by threatening to revoke his commission, we should be entitled to pronounce this a very unfair and a very injudicious proceeding ; treating the advocate ill, and constituting badly for their own interests. Nothing indeed would justify it but a conviction that he was betraying his duty, or falling into manifest blunders in the discharge of it. But any resolutions passed for his information and assistance, any suggestions tendered for his guidance, subject to his approval, would be both fair and prudent. So the people, and they who on their part discuss public measures, would be wrong in exceeding similar bounds were the conduct of the government, including their representatives, free from all suspicion, whether of treachery or of imbecility.

But in practice these bounds are constantly overleaped, and the excess is both more likely and less hurtful in exact proportion as the people are not fully represented by their choice of deputies. If there be large classes not represented at all, then such interference can never be the subject of reprehension ; it is not against the representative principle.

We may further observe, that the influence of the Press is much more slowly effectual in causing the adoption of measures which

are popular favourites, than in delaying or preventing it. The occasions must be rare indeed, the unanimity of the Press and the people unbroken, their feelings deep-seated and loudly expressed to drive the government into a measure adverse to its opinion or wishes. By slow degrees alone it is, generally speaking, that public discussion can cause the adoption of plans originating more in the people's desires than in the wishes of their deputies or their rulers. On the other hand, the clamour excited against an unpopular measure has not seldom stifled it at the first, and much oftener delayed it for a while, operating in either case at the moment.

In one respect the Press is constantly operative, and produces very great good, with hardly any admixture whatever of evil. The great and immediate publicity which it gives to all the acts of the representative and of the ruler affords a most salutary check on the conduct of both, and prevents many errors being committed through ignorance or inadvertence. But this benefit of the Press can hardly be reckoned any influence or power exercised by the people. That influence or power consists in the control exerted by the printed and published and universally circulated opinions or wishes of the community. The representative and the ruler are swayed by these, and oftentimes they are not merely deterred from wrong doing, but prevented and obstructed in the honest and enlightened discharge of their duty by the clamours of ignorant or of interested parties.

The two opposite effects of this influence may be illustrated by taking the instances of its most legitimate and most improper application.

When the opinions of enlightened men, freely promulgated, are diffused and find general favour with the community; when the errors of a political system are fearlessly exposed; when the impatience of the people, under abuses of long standing, and powerfully supported, breaks out in complaints against the ruling powers; a real service is rendered to the public welfare, and no charge can be brought against the people of resuming their delegated trust, or begrudging their deputies the authority with which they have been clothed. Indeed, those deputies ought to feel contented that the cause of truth and good government is thus promoted, and the general interest consulted. They are not controlled or interfered with, but find their views rather furthered than impeded.

When the virulence of personal attack deters a representative from pursuing the course which his honest and deliberate judgment dictates; when dread of incurring printed censure deters him from doing what his duty, according to his own conception of it, requires; when to gain the applause of such as regulate the Press, or to disarm their hostility, he shapes his conduct according to their wishes;—then he shamefully betrays his trust; those who thus beleaguer him, and he who suffers himself to be swayed by his

fears or by his love of praise, equally commit an offence of a very grave kind in the eyes of all rational men.

We have hitherto been regarding the Press as either an organ of public opinion, directly moved or inspired by the people, or at least as an indication and exponent of it, coinciding with the people's views, and adopted, if not authorized, by the people. It is certain that in a good degree this is likely to be the case. In the long run the Press, if the people be not split into parties, will be pretty sure to coincide with their opinions and feelings; and where there prevail party divisions, each portion of the community will sooner or later influence some portion of the Press. But it is also quite certain that there is here, as in other processes both of the moral and physical world, action and reaction. If the public sentiments act upon the Press, so does the press upon those sentiments; and this occasions mischief of a very grievous kind to the people themselves, and to popular government. It is one of the worst evils of that form of polity, that it gives the greatest scope to this abuse; an abuse of so pernicious a kind that nothing can reconcile a reflecting mind to it but the persuasion of its being an almost inevitable consequence of free discussion, and thus regarding it as the heavy price which must be paid for this inestimable blessing.

It is in two ways that the Press thus produces its mischief. Private individuals, armed with no commission from any quarter, much less invested with authority from any power in the state, and bearing no certificate of any qualification to recommend them, assume the direction of periodical works, and do not give their names to the public. Their capacity for the task which they have undertaken is of course to be judged by the manner in which they perform it; about that there can be no difficulty or doubt. But their trustworthiness, either as relaters of facts or as guides of opinion, is a wholly different matter, and of that, the most material portion of the character which they ought to have, they furnish no vouchers whatever. They may be the most false and deceitful of human kind; they may be the most spiteful and malignant; they may be men whose names, if made known, would deprive every assertion they advanced of every claim to credit, and strip all they wrote and published of all chance of being believed or even listened to. They may have sinister and sordid views in putting forth their statements; then they may have a personal ground of quarrel with individuals, or with parties in the state or the church; and thus be the very last persons in the whole world whom any one would believe if the mask under which they lurk to assail their adversaries were torn away. Their narratives may be dictated by mercantile or by money speculations; and the persons who, ignorant of the source whence these stories proceed, rush to some market to invest their capital, would be loth to risk a shilling of it on the faith of their statement did they know the purpose for which it was put forth. They may be rival authors as well as rival

tradesmen, and may have published some translation of the same work, and thus have a direct interest in running down the succeeding translation; but they speak in the plural number, and the reader is utterly deceived, and supposes he is hearing the sentence of a just and impartial judge, when, in fact, the opposite party has, unknown to him, crawled upon the bench, and, personating the judge, delivers in a feigned voice sentence in his own favour. Again, their views may be pernicious to the state. They may be men reckless and abandoned, desirous of change for the confusion it produces, anxious to see the most desperate courses taken for the sake of that mischief, the risk of which would make all virtuous men dread even the most prudent and cautious innovations. They may be concealed partakers of abuse, creatures engendered in corruption and sustained in their noxious existence by the filth that first warmed them into life; their names if disclosed would make the defence which they undertake of oppression and misgovernment, their resistance to the people's rights and the people's improvement, only further those sacred interests; but they defend the misrule on which they fatten, and assail those who would reform it with the appearance of pronouncing an impartial award upon a public question foreign to their own interests.

It is endless to go through more particulars. Whoever has lived long in political society, but more especially they who have lived in courts of law, must full surely know that by such means as these are the people supplied with narratives of fact and statements of doctrine. The practice of deception becomes nearly universal. The readers are betrayed into a confidence which they never would bestow were they aware of the authority upon which what they read is grounded, and the views with which it is prepared and promulgated.

If such is the constitution, generally speaking, of the Periodical Press in all free countries, wherever party prevails this engine becomes a very easy acquisition to any faction; and it is worked with additional vigour and increased effect. This, however, greatly lessens the evil; for as it is well known to which party each publication belongs, something like a rent is made in the veil which conceals the real authors, or at least, the names of their respective patrons and employers being given, the public are warned against believing what is said against their adversaries. It is still true, however, that the followers of each party are made to believe whatever their unknown agents may please to promulgate; and also that numberless things are published by them from their lurking places, which the respectable leaders of the several parties would be extremely loth to give in their own person. ^a

^a This is not an imaginary case; it has repeatedly occurred.

^a By far the worst instances of these great abuses are to be found in America, where, nevertheless, some of the editors give their names unblushingly to that society which they daily outrage by their detestable publications. This excess of effrontery could never be tolerated in this country, where, however, persons pretty

The consequence of this abuse of the press is twofold. There is often given to public opinion a wrong bias, which lasts long enough to create delay in the adoption of important measures, or even to produce a permanent effect upon the mind of the people. There is still more frequently an obstacle interposed to the discharge of the public duty of ministers or representatives, by the clamour excited among the constituents of the latter, and among those classes to whom the former look for support. The measures and the men have neither of them fair play. If the people really, upon due consideration, adopted the views inculcated upon them, no one could complain of the result; it is one of the consequences of a free or popular government. But what we have a good right to complain of is the effect produced by a very few persons who, to serve their own or their patrons' purposes, mislead the people, deceiving them by groundless statements into erroneous opinions, or inflaming them by well-contrived violence into unruly feelings.

There was no abuse in the Athenian government more grievously felt than the power of the profligate men whose practised eloquence "wielded at will that fierce democracy." Their arts, and their shameless want of principle, are well known, and we have, in a former part of this work, had occasion to contemplate some of the mischiefs which they did. Among us there are very different talents, no doubt, brought to the same work of swaying the people; but though of an inferior order, those talents are perfectly well suited to the work they are brought to do; and, accordingly, the Press has with us succeeded to the influence of the orators, only that the latter came manfully forward in their own persons, and encountered the scorn or the execration of mankind when they were found to have been malignant or treacherous guides.

There is one remedy for all this, but to those who regard the uses of the Press as very important and chiefly lament its abuse for their sake, it is a melancholy one to contemplate. The evil tends by its excess to work its own cure. It is said that in America no effect is produced by the assaults on private character, or even on the estimation in which public men are held, from the overdone abuse of the Press. Every one must be aware how inconsiderable, even in this country where the Press is far more pure, its influence has become of late years, in consequence of the greater prevalence of slander and violence in its productions. Thus a kind of remedy is provided by the excess of the evil.

It has often been questioned whether a restraint should not be imposed upon the Press, with a view to check those abuses by which it at once works mischief to the community, and lowers its own

generally known almost as much as if their papers bore their names, are known to drive a most scandalous traffic in slander, sometimes to gratify political parties by whom they are paid, sometimes still more wickedly to extort money by means of threats. The Lord Chief Justice has lately obtained a most valuable enactment to check this abominable practice.

value for good purposes. The more closely this important question has been considered the more plainly has it appeared that any such interference would be dangerous in the extreme. Beside the certainty that it would, if effectual, increase the power of the Press to an inconvenient degree, it would tend to impede the progress of knowledge and to fetter the freedom of discussion. There would be no possibility of devising any mode of restraint which should not place an undue control in the hands of the government. The conductors of the Press, labouring under the imperfections of the libel law, have occasionally desired that they should have a censorship placed over them, in order to be secured from the risk of prosecution under a law which is vague and uncertain, and ever liable to be abused. But little did they reflect that, a previous licence being required, it must at once destroy their independence, and thus not merely obstruct their usefulness, but undermine their whole character, influence, and means of supporting themselves. An amendment of the law of libel, which shall at once protect authors and publishers from oppressive and vexatious prosecutions, and protect individuals from the slanders of concealed enemies, giving a due check to the dissemination of seditious, obscene, and blasphemous matter, is the only remedy which can safely be adopted for the mischief.

The people, again, can only be released from the control which is now exercised over them by the progress of knowledge, and the efforts of courageous and enlightened men to stand the brunt of anonymous attacks, while they inculcate sound opinions, exhorting their countrymen above all things to think for themselves, and suffer no unknown writer to dupe and to betray them. Lord Melbourne, when at the head of the Liberal party and of the government some years ago, earned the gratitude of his country by the honest declaration which he made in the House of Lords (doubtless with some rhetorical exaggeration), that it remained to be seen how long the people would endure a press which made it a general rule of its conduct never to tell any truth, and always to deal wholesale in falsehood. But the people must open their eyes to the errors and the vices of their false guides. They may be well persuaded of these, acknowledging them as often as the subject is broached; they may be disgusted with the reckless statements which are palmed upon them; they may feel alternately indignant and contemptuous at the solemn importance of anonymous sentences condemning or absolving, and the presumption of the dictation issued to the community and the government by the most obscure individuals, only grounding their importance upon the fact of their being unknown. But this is not enough; the people must cease to let anonymous statements influence them, merely because it is repeated seven times a week: they must learn to suppose that a thing being printed does not make it true; they must give over running after slander and

scurrility, as the only interesting composition; they must regard subjects and measures as of more importance than persons; and they must read for the sake of instruction, not for the momentary satisfaction of having their merriment excited or their spleen gratified. When the diffusion of useful knowledge shall have so far improved the habits of the people, then no such evils will result from the Press as we have been contemplating. It will be the source of great and unmixed benefits to the government and to the people; duly checking the one, usefully enlightening the other; saving both from the errors alike of rashness and of sloth.

SECTION II.—*Public Meetings.*

Much of what has been said in the last section is applicable to the subject of this. The people's right of Meeting in large bodies is unquestionable in every free country. The deliverance of petitions to the government and to the legislative assemblies; the sending instructions to their representatives; the complaining of grievances which may have escaped the attention of those representatives; the keeping a watch over them in order to prevent any neglect of their duty or betraying of their trust; all these things require the people occasionally to assemble, and all of them are consistent with the delegation of the people's power. But these rights must be soberly and moderately exercised. If the people threaten their representatives or the executive magistrates; if they dictate their line of conduct in any given case; much more if they chiefly by their numbers or the overawing appearance of physical force, or by the frequency and regularity of their Meetings, show an intention of usurping the functions of their deputies; then they resume the delegated trust, and the representative principle is wholly violated.

Nothing can be more certain than that the worst excesses of the French Revolution were occasioned by the interference of the people with the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly first, and afterwards of the National Convention. Hardly a day passed without some popular commotion; and it was the ordinary spectacle in the Legislative Body to see mobs enter the Hall, and demand the adoption of certain favourite measures. It was, I remember, usual to say in those days that the whole of the mischief arose from suffering the galleries to interfere with their plaudits or their hisses, and from admitting strangers into the body of the Assembly when they came to petition or to remonstrate. These were, assuredly, great evils, and productive of further mischief; but they were only fruits of the same bad plant which would have shed destruction over the infant republic had the galleries been as silent and submissive as our own, and the doors been closed like ours against all intrusion. The people, or at least a portion of the people, both in Paris and in the great provincial towns, had only partially given over their power to

the Assembly and the Convention. They were still far too much excited by the transactions of the day to bear in silence their exclusion from the active exercise of their power, to sit quietly by while their representatives performed the whole functions of the government. They accordingly were distributed in societies and in clubs; they had daily, or rather nightly, meetings to discuss the proceedings taken by their deputies during the morning; they arrogated to themselves the right of approving or rejecting all that was done by the constituted authorities; and they knew their own power from the physical force in their hands well enough to rest satisfied with nothing short of an admission to a direct control over those authorities. *The numbers of the clubs themselves, and their immediate retainers, were sufficient to have operated upon the government; but they had a direct communication at Paris, through the municipality, and in some of the other great towns, less regularly, but almost as effectually, with the rabble of the streets—men fit for any desperate enterprise, and seeking to gain by the confusion which to all the good and the wise presents the aspect of the worst political ills. It was, in truth, the control of the government in the hands not so much of the people as of the mob; and, accordingly, the party chiefs used that mob more effectually for their own factious and selfish purposes than their influence in the legislature itself. This is no doubt an extreme case; it was during a revolutionary crisis; and had anything of the same kind been continued after the tempest passed away, there would have been established an anomalous and mongrel government, which in no respect deserved the name of representative. The excess of the evil worked its own cure. The Reign of Terror strengthened whatever constitution succeeded that of the year 1793; and the horror of mob violence continued not only throughout the Directorial government to prevent all direct interference whatever of the people, but was the main prop and stay, first of the Consular, and then of the Imperial regimen, in both of which the people were deprived of all influence, direct or indirect.

In this country we have been at different times visited with the abuse of Public Meetings. In the year 1795 they were prohibited by statute, and, as it appears to me, without a sufficient warrant from the extent which the mischief had reached. The consequence of this was unfortunate for the government of that day. It is very possible that the right of meeting might have been so far abused in the course of a few months as to justify in all men's eyes the strong measures adopted by the legislature. It is quite certain that few could perceive the strength of the case upon which those measures were grounded, although they were easily carried by the strength of the government.

In 1819 the case was materially different. Immense multitudes had been accustomed to congregate; and there was reason to

apprehend the effects that might result from such displays of physical force. Many friends of popular rights were convinced that some check had become necessary, some regulation at least of such assemblages; and, among others, I well remember my friend Lord Hutchinson, when I complained of the Six Acts, saying that he thought the Whig party should be thankful they were out of office, and that the odium of passing some such measure was thrown off their shoulders upon those of their adversaries; "For depend upon it," he said, "the right of Meeting at all is in jeopardy from such assemblages—so numerous and so crowded." My opinion, however, that these repressive Laws were not required is strongly confirmed by the circumstance that a general election occurred within four months of their being passed, and this falling within the exception in the provisoes, public meetings were every where held, with all the excitement of such an occasion, and without any breach of the peace.

The late proceedings in Ireland belong to another class. They are, without any doubt, inconsistent with even the semblance of a regular, above all a representative, government. Meetings of 30,000 and 40,000 persons held all over the country, and so frequently held that they seemed to be one body constantly adjourning and re-assembling, are wholly subversive of the legislature's and the government's authority. Their being peaceable in their demeanour, chiefly from the strict discipline which their leaders, lay and clerical, exercised, rather increases than lessens the risk attending such proceedings. The danger of violent outrage, the alarm excited among peaceful men, the intimidation by which some are forced to attend, others deterred from counter proceedings, are of themselves sufficient to prove their illegality. But their manifest tendency to overawe the government and the parliament is sufficient to demonstrate the necessity of suppressing them at all hazards. If they had been permitted to go on training the whole people, and so far disciplining them that only one step, that of arming with pikes, would have been wanting to convert half a million of men into a rebellious army, the highest public duty of the government would have been betrayed. But if even the system had been suffered of immense Meetings held twice a week on one subject, and showing great physical force, though never used to break the peace, there can be no doubt whatever that the government of this country would have ceased, as far as Ireland was concerned, to reside in King, Lords, and Commons.—It would have been transferred to other, and to the worst hands.

It is never to be lost sight of that such Meetings as we have been speaking of, and indeed all popular assemblies, are convoked, not for deliberation or for discussion, but for very different purposes. They are attended by men all of one opinion; all engaged heart and soul in the pursuit of one object. They meet to excite

and influence each other; to give vent to feelings which they have long entertained and cherished, or declare opinions which they, or some person for them, have already formed. They bear no contradiction; they listen to no reason. They are bodies of men assembled for action, not for consultation; their real objects are to prepare for some violent act, and to impress the Government with fear.—A government which can suffer them no longer deserves its name, for it has abdicated its functions.

Upon the whole we may rest assured that the right of Public Meetings must, to be safe for the state and consistent with a representative government, be either temperately exercised from the good sense of the people themselves, or it must be placed by the legislature under wholesome and wise restraints.

If not abused, there can be no doubt that the right of Meeting is of great value to the people. Some reasoners who have a prejudice against it, and the late Mr. Canning was at the head of them, have argued that the mixed constitution of this country did not recognise any numerous body acting, unless in a corporate capacity. They have held corporations of all kinds, whether formally and nominally such, or only quasi corporations, that is, persons of a certain specified description, persons of a "defined caste," as Mr. Canning called it, as well entitled to meet, and as doing no harm by their combined proceedings. All others they conceived to be excluded. I confess I think this a somewhat fantastic refinement. No one can see much definition in the thirty thousand freeholders who have a right to throng the sheriff's court in the West Riding of Yorkshire; nor even any peculiar virtue in the assemblage of ten thousand persons in name and legal description, as well as in substance, corporators, the freemen of London. The genius of our constitution admits all men to much more important offices than attending public meetings, and admits them without any regard to class or caste. Did these reasoners never hear of a *tales de circumstantibus*—jurors chosen to make up the special jury pannel's deficiencies? These in practice are, it is true, generally taken from the common jury pannel; but by the letter of the ancient constitution they are to be chosen indiscriminately from the bystanders who happen to be in court at the time the cause comes on. Then who were the original voters for members of parliament and for most corporate officers in boroughs? All the inhabitants, without qualification; that is, every person dwelling in the several boroughs. We may rest assured that this fanciful theory rests neither upon any reasonable ground nor upon any learned view of our laws.

SECTION III.—*Judicial Functions.*

The most important department in every state is the administration of justice. It is, indeed, for this inestimable benefit that society is chiefly framed; and it is the price for which men are induced to give up a portion of their natural liberty when they place themselves under the restraints of regular government. As it would not be too much to affirm, that even the worst judicial system, under the most absolute despotism, is better than the lawless state of barbarous life, so it is certainly true that the judicial portion of the most free and enlightened state is the great zone which embraces and binds together the entire political edifice, indissolubly connecting its upper and lower portions; mitigating the evils endured by the humbler from the possessions and the power of the exalted classes; protecting the few from the oppressions of the many; cementing and consolidating the whole of the great social pyramid.

It is of great consequence to the people that they should have a share in so important a branch of the state. It is the nature of all democratic and of all mixed governments, both in ancient and in modern times, to confer this high privilege upon them. In Athens the judicial business was in their hands far too entirely; they formed the members of the great tribunals, excepting the Areopagus, before which all questions of civil or of criminal justice came. This system led to the greatest evils; it occasioned the most cruel oppression of those who had lost the popular favour; the most shameful escapes of the criminals whom the people liked. The arguments, or rather the topics of declamation used by the advocates, both when addressing the courts and when writing for parties who were nominally to defend themselves, are such as plainly prove that the pursuit of the truth was the last thing thought of in such trials. In Rome the people acted as *judices* or jurors, to assist the magistrates who were also appointed by popular election. This was a far less exceptionable course of proceeding than the Athenian; and much less injustice both to individuals and to the public was wrought by it. In modern times all free states have adopted trial by Jury, generally in both civil and criminal cases; always in criminal.

It is not easy to overrate the importance of this function to the state, or the benefit which the people derive from the exercise of it. Many questions are far better determined by one or more judges; points of law, of course, must always be left to them; but mere questions of fact, too, are oftentimes better entrusted to their investigation. Sometimes an arbitrator is the best judge; and when a long and complicated investigation of facts, especially if these are in many parts mixed up with legal questions, is left to

a single person of competent learning and experience, a far better trial is obtained than any judge or any Jury could afford. But in three classes of causes the use of Jury-trial is admirable, and all experience satisfies us of its virtue. *First*, where a question of conflicting evidence arises, nothing can be better than that several persons of different habits of mind and various capacities should discuss, sift, and decide it. *Secondly*, where an award of damages as a compensation for an injury received is to be made, the same diversity of the Jurors' minds and views gives the best security that a right amount will be fixed upon. *Thirdly*, when there is a party to be tried, or a right investigated, the government being the prosecutor, or some powerful person or corporation being the plaintiff, it is essential to liberty that judges named by the Crown, and always belonging to the same class with the powerful party, should not decide on the fate of the person or the cause; therefore the equals of the less powerful party are the only persons in whom this important office can be safely vested.

Such are the benefits of Jury trial to the judicial system. To the people it is of a still further use. They are thus habituated to public business of the 'gravest and most important description. They become conversant in the laws by which their rights are defined, and their duties regulated. They learn the nature of the government under which they live, in its most essential branch. They act and observe under the superintendence and instruction of a virtuous, a learned, and an experienced functionary. Withdrawn from all the turmoil of the popular assembly, its violence, its rashness, its deafness to reason, its abnegation of fairness and candour, they bear a part in a solemn and important discussion which can only be conducted by rational measures and determined according to the truth of the case alone. They are engaged in an inquiry where only truth is the object of pursuit, and all matters are disposed of on their real merits. The political education of the people is incalculably forwarded by this proceeding; their moral habits are much improved by it.

There is nothing more certain, too, that, unlike the other powers reserved in the people's hands, their judicial office is performed and all its precious benefits secured without any risk being run of evils. No mischief can ever ensue from it, as the price paid for so great advantages. If it be said that errors are unavoidably committed by Jurors into which professional judges would not fall, the answer is, that in all well-constructed judicial systems, means are provided for correcting these, or for obviating their effects. If it be alleged that an obstinate Juror may, in defiance of the truth, and in disregard of his oath, suffer the guilty to escape from party or from personal bias; it must, on the other hand, be borne in mind, that this is a small price to pay for the perfect security which a Jury affords to all men, even the humblest, against the ruin that power

and its minions might bring upon them. As long as a Jury must be appealed to by the most powerful parties in the State in order to overwhelm an obnoxious individual, we may rest assured that there is little hazard of such a catastrophe destroying an innocent man. This is a real power, a solid influence, an efficacious check to misgovernment, placed in the hands of the people, and never likely to abused.

THE END.

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